



# Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS



FRIDAY — 16 SEP 2022

	International	National	Regional and Local
<b>Events, Opportunities</b> <a href="#">Go to articles</a>	<a href="#">09/16 Day 205 of the Russia invasion</a> <a href="#">09/16 Ukraine finds mass burial grave</a> <a href="#">09/16 Germany trusteeship Russia oil refineries</a> <a href="#">09/16 Iran: US must lift sanctions for nuclear deal</a> <a href="#">09/16 US disappointed sanctions slow for Russia</a> <a href="#">09/16 US: China, Russia military share weakness</a> <a href="#">09/16 Prices soaring everywhere</a> <a href="#">09/16 FedEx warns of global recession</a> <a href="#">09/16 Zambia faces economic collapse</a> <a href="#">09/16 France warns on Covid resurgence</a> <a href="#">09/16 France air traffic controllers on strike</a> <a href="#">09/16 Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan agree ceasefire</a> <a href="#">09/16 Armenia, Azerbaijan ceasefire still holds</a> <a href="#">09/15 Russia mercenaries recruit from prisons</a> <a href="#">09/15 US: \$600M additional supplies to Ukraine</a> <a href="#">09/15 Pope: arming Ukraine 'morally acceptable'</a> <a href="#">09/15 US targets Russia with punitive measures</a> <a href="#">09/15 Russia rare nod to China on 'concerns'</a> <a href="#">09/15 Japan reopening: closure effects will linger</a> <a href="#">09/15 UN warns: 345M face acute food insecurity</a>	<a href="#">09/16 USMC rescinds Covid vax penalties</a> <a href="#">09/15 Monkeypox cases fall; no one knows why</a> <a href="#">09/15 CDC: rare complications from monkeypox</a> <a href="#">09/15 Covid in seniors linked to Alzheimer's risk</a> <a href="#">09/15 Hundreds dying of Covid daily ahead of fall</a> <a href="#">09/15 Strike averted, but crisis far from over</a> <a href="#">09/15 Railroad strike averted in tentative deal</a> <a href="#">09/15 Calif. as epicenter for guaranteed income</a> <a href="#">09/15 School districts lure: 4-day school weeks</a> <a href="#">09/15 Friction mounts as border crossings soar</a> <a href="#">09/15 Mississippi lifts Jackson boil water notice</a> <a href="#">09/15 Suicide prevention emergency responders</a> <a href="#">09/15 Firefighters gain against Calif. biggest blaze</a> <a href="#">09/15 Climate change impacts healthcare services</a> <a href="#">09/15 Tropical storm watches: Fiona strengthens</a> <a href="#">09/15 Thanksgiving as bad as summer for travel?</a> <a href="#">09/14 NYC pandemic job losses linger</a>	<a href="#">09/15 Downtown Seattle slow recovery</a> <a href="#">09/15 Seattle mayor: 'our streets are unsafe'</a> <a href="#">09/15 KC Metro 'workforce shortage' cuts trips</a> <a href="#">09/15 Index wildfire evacuations downgraded</a> <a href="#">09/15 Statewide critical blood shortage</a> <a href="#">09/15 Overpriced housing? Rent indefinitely</a> <a href="#">09/15 Puyallup mobile home families settlement</a> <a href="#">09/15 Cop claims she can drive 90mph; you can't</a> <a href="#">09/15 Seattle Humane is 125yrs-old</a>
<b>Cyber, Tech Awareness</b> <a href="#">Go to articles</a>	<a href="#">09/16 Crypto scams soar, domains surge 335%</a> <a href="#">09/15 Gamaredon APT targets Ukraine govt.</a> <a href="#">09/15 RedLine stealer targets YouTube users</a> <a href="#">09/15 China revamps aging malware for attacks</a> <a href="#">09/15 Hive claims Bell Canada subsidiary attack</a>	<a href="#">09/16 Fake cryptocurrency giveaway sites spike</a> <a href="#">09/15 DC top city for remote work 2021</a> <a href="#">09/15 Uber investigates network breach</a> <a href="#">09/15 EO blocks China investment in US tech</a> <a href="#">09/15 Tech firms to combat violent extremism</a> <a href="#">09/15 Iranian hackers moonlight their expertise</a> <a href="#">09/15 CBP copied massive American phone data</a> <a href="#">09/15 Malware on pirated content sites major risk</a>	
<b>Terrorism, Extremism</b> <a href="#">Go to articles</a>		<a href="#">09/16 Gitmo stuck in cycle of costly delays</a> <a href="#">09/15 NCTC; AQ, IS shaken by leadership losses</a> <a href="#">09/15 Declassified report predicted IS resurgence</a>	
<b>Suspicious, Unusual</b> <a href="#">Go to articles</a>	<a href="#">09/15 London: the queue to end all queues</a> <a href="#">09/15 Summer 2022 among hottest on record</a>		<a href="#">09/15 NFL Commanders mug: Washington State</a>
<b>Crime, Criminals</b> <a href="#">Go to articles</a>	<a href="#">09/16 UK police: 2 officers stabbed in London</a> <a href="#">09/15 Mexico arrests in students' disappearance</a>	<a href="#">09/15 Virginia denies DC sniper parole</a> <a href="#">09/15 Judge sentences cartel boss to life</a> <a href="#">09/15 No posthumous pardon of George Floyd</a> <a href="#">09/15 Oklahoma: missing people, buried bones</a> <a href="#">09/15 Complaint to UN: 'death by incarceration'</a>	<a href="#">09/15 Community: man throws rocks on SR900</a> <a href="#">09/15 Retrial: getaway driver 2009 police killings</a> <a href="#">09/15 Drug dealer stakes claim Seattle business</a> <a href="#">09/15 Yakima: seizure illegal weapons from cartel</a> <a href="#">09/15 Gunman Seattle deadly shooting 'not guilty'</a> <a href="#">09/15 Yakima business indicted: rotten fruit juice</a>

[DISCLAIMER and FAIR USE Notice](#)

## Events, Opportunities

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 US targets Russia with punitive measures
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2022/09/16/Russia-punitive-measures/2281663293309/">https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2022/09/16/Russia-punitive-measures/2281663293309/</a>
GIST	Sept. 15 (UPI) -- The Biden administration imposed a slew of punitive measures targeting Russia on Thursday and announced hundreds of millions of dollars in new weapons for Ukraine, as the Kremlin warned the United States against crossing the "red line" by sending Kyiv long-range artillery.

The U.S. Treasury, State and Commerce Departments took aim Thursday at Russian defense entities, key advanced-technology firms that support the Kremlin's defense base and Moscow's financial infrastructure with sanctions and designations on dozens of entities and officials and expanded export controls.

The State Department specifically designated 22 people, including Maxim Stanislavovich Oreshkin, a former Russian economic development minister and the leader of the board of directors of the government.

Five Russians appointed to head Kremlin civilian-military governments in Ukraine were hit with the punitive designations for stealing Ukrainian grain for Moscow while 17 other appointed heads of Russian governments in Ukrainian territory were designated for being complicit in efforts to undermine Kyiv's sovereignty.

Thirty-one defense, technology and electronics entities were also designated "to further constrain Russia's advanced technology industries and their contribution to Russia's defense industrial base," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement.

"The United States will continue to take actions against those who support Russia's defense-industrial base, its violation of human rights and its attempts to legitimize its occupation of Ukrainian territory, wherever they may be," he said.

In the coordinated move, the U.S. Treasury also targeted 22 Russian officials and two entities with asset freezes and travel bans over furthering the Kremlin's objectives in Ukraine.

Among those sanctioned include Maria Alexeyevna Lvova-Belova, Russia's presidential commissioner for Children's Rights and who works directly under Russian President Vladimir Putin, over efforts to forcibly deport thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia where they receive so-called patriot education.

Ramzan Akhmatovic Kadyrov and six of his family members were sanctioned over his position as the leader of Russia's Republic of Chechnya and for being a "brutal warlord" who has been accused of torture and murder as well as deploying troops to Ukraine, including to Bucha, where Russian forces brutally killed hundreds of civilians in what has become a symbol of the war's cruelty.

A neo-Nazi militia fighting in Ukraine as well as its leaders and seven Russian occupation authorities accused of abusing Ukrainians were also hit with sanctions while the Treasury imposed a prohibition on quantum computing services to cut Moscow off from key services offered by U.S. companies.

"Those designated today -- from perpetrators of violence to an official facilitating the purposeful removal of children from Ukraine -- provide examples of the behavior that has become synonymous with the Government of Russia's unprovoked war," Blinken said.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen described the actions as the United States seeking to hold Russia accountable for "its war crimes, atrocities and aggression."

"As Ukraine presses forward with defending its freedom, today we're taking steps to further degrade Russia's ability to rebuild its military, hold perpetrators of violence accountable and further financially isolate Putin," she said in a statement.

As part of the U.S. actions, the Commerce expanded and tightened U.S. export controls of Russia and Belarus by adding items useful to their chemical and biological weapons production capabilities and those needed for advanced manufacturing, production and development.

Meanwhile, the State Department separately announced a drawdown of some \$600 million in U.S. arms and equipment from its military inventory for Ukraine on Thursday.

The 21st drawdown since September for Ukraine brings the total U.S. military assistance to the war-torn country to \$15.8 amid the Biden administration.

<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p>The specifics of the weapons and equipment pledged were not revealed.</p> <p>Amid the nearly seven-month-old war, the United States and its allies have repeatedly armed Ukraine in its fight while Kyiv officials continue to call on the West for larger and more advanced weaponry.</p> <p>In Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's nightly public address Thursday, he called for additional air defense systems, stating without them "Russia will continue to feel impunity and provoke new local and global crises."</p> <p>"Supporting Ukraine with weapons, ammunition and finances is crucial for peace in Europe," he said. "The better support we have, the sooner this war will end."</p> <p>Russia, in turn, has repeatedly warned the United States against arming Ukraine and have accused it of participating in a "proxy war."</p> <p>On Thursday, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters during a press briefing in Moscow amid worries that Kyiv intends to ask Washington, D.C., for long-range missiles that if it complies the United States will have crossed a "'red line' and become a direct party to the conflict."</p> <p>"We reserve the right to protect Russian territory by all means available to us," she said. "Such an irresponsible step will be extremely destabilizing, contribute to an additional increase in tensions and provoke an arms race."</p>
-------------------------------	--

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan agree ceasefire</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/kyrgyzstan-says-border-outposts-under-tajik-fire-again-2022-09-16/">https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/kyrgyzstan-says-border-outposts-under-tajik-fire-again-2022-09-16/</a>
GIST	<p>BISHKEK, Sept 16 (Reuters) - Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov and his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rakhmon agreed to order a ceasefire and troop pullback in a meeting in Uzbekistan on Friday, the Kyrgyz president's office said, after deadly clashes between the two Russian allies.</p> <p>The former Soviet republics earlier accused each other of restarting fighting in a disputed area that has left at least three dead and dozens wounded.</p> <p>The ceasefire was set to take effect from 16:00 local time (10:00 GMT), Kyrgyz border guards said in a statement. Tajik authorities confirmed that the agreement had been reached.</p> <p>Earlier on Friday, Moscow urged a cessation of hostilities.</p> <p>Kyrgyzstan has said that Tajik forces using tanks, armoured personnel carriers and mortars entered at least one Kyrgyz village and shelled the airport of the Kyrgyz town of Bat ken and adjacent areas.</p> <p>In turn, Tajikistan accused Kyrgyz forces of shelling an outpost and seven villages with "heavy weaponry" in the same area, which is famous for its jigsaw-puzzle political and ethnic geography and became the site of similar hostilities last year, also nearly leading to a war.</p> <p>A civilian was killed and three injured, authorities in the Tajik city of Isfara said. Two Tajik border guards were killed earlier this week.</p> <p>Kyrgyzstan reported 31 wounded overnight in its southern Bat ken province which borders Tajikistan's northern Sughd region and features a Tajik exclave, Vorukh, a key hotspot in recent conflicts.</p>

	<p>Japarov and Rakhmon both attended a regional security and cooperation summit in Uzbekistan on Friday. Neither mentioned the conflict in their speeches at the event where Russian President Vladimir Putin and other leaders were present.</p> <p>Clashes over the poorly demarcated border are frequent, but usually de-escalate quickly.</p> <p><b>SOVIET LEGACY</b></p> <p>Border issues in Central Asia stem to a large extent from the Soviet era when Moscow tried to divide the region between ethnic groups whose settlements were often located amidst those of other ethnicities.</p> <p>Both countries host Russian military bases.</p> <p>Temur Umarov, a fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace focussing on Central Asia, said the remote, agricultural villages at the centre of the dispute are not economically significant, but that both sides have given it an exaggerated political significance.</p> <p>Umarov said that governments in both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have come to rely on what he called "populist, nationalist rhetoric" that made an exchange of territory aimed at ending the conflict impossible.</p> <p>Another Central Asia analyst, Alexander Knyazev, said the sides showed no will to resolve the conflict peacefully and the mutual territorial claims provoked aggressive attitudes on all levels.</p> <p>He said only third-party peacekeepers could prevent further conflicts by establishing a demilitarised zone in the area.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>09/16 FedEx warns of global recession</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/finance/streettalk/fedex-forecast-recession-warning/2022/09/16/id/1087746/">https://www.newsmax.com/finance/streettalk/fedex-forecast-recession-warning/2022/09/16/id/1087746/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>FedEx Corp. on Thursday withdrew the financial forecast it issued just three months ago, saying a global demand slowdown accelerated at the end of August and was on pace to worsen in the November quarter. Shares in the global delivery firm tumbled more than 16% after it also reported revenue and profit for the first-quarter ended Aug. 31 that missed Wall Street targets. S&amp;P 500 futures fell Thursday as FedEx added to worries about a slowing global economy.</p> <p>Altogether, a worldwide slowdown in economic activity caused shortfalls in FedEx Express revenues of \$500 million and FedEx Ground revenues of \$300 million in the quarter, FedEx said.</p> <p>The wide gulf between FedEx's performance and Wall Street's expectations comes after analysts had already tempered estimates for the quarter, said Cowen analyst Helane Becker, who added that company shares have shed about 10% of their value since they issued their now-withdrawn forecast in June.</p> <p>And the warning will likely ramp up pressure on FedEx's new chief executive officer, Raj Subramaniam, to close a profitability gap with UPS, after it ceded two director seats to activist investor D.E. Shaw in June.</p> <p>"Global volumes declined as macroeconomic trends significantly worsened later in the quarter, both internationally and in the U.S. We are swiftly addressing these headwinds, but given the speed at which conditions shifted, first quarter results are below our expectations," Subramaniam said in a statement.</p> <p>Subramaniam told CNBC's Jim Cramer Thursday he fears a global recession, saying, "These numbers, they don't portend very well."</p> <p><b>COST CUTTING</b></p>

FedEx said it was cutting costs including shutting some FedEx Office locations, reducing labor hours and consolidating some sorting facilities.

The warning comes as consumers around the world are struggling with higher costs for necessities like food, fuel and shelter at the same time as they are shifting spending away from e-commerce back to in-person shopping, dining and travel.

The World Bank earlier on Thursday said the world's three largest economies - the United States, China, and the euro area - have been slowing sharply, and even a "moderate hit to the global economy over the next year could tip it into recession."

Some experts said FedEx should have caught wind of cooling demand much more quickly — especially after Amazon said it over built warehouses, U.S. seaport directors signaled decelerating imports and consumer discretionary spending continued to struggle due to inflation.

"They should have seen this coming a month ago," said Satish Jindel, an industry consultant who helped start and expand the company that became FedEx Ground.

FedEx overestimated demand for last year's peak holiday shipping season, drawing complaints from its independent contractors who paid for unneeded trucks and workers.

Shippers like FedEx and UPS imposed a variety of surcharges during the pandemic for issues from fuel to special handling, and those profit-boosting charges are at risk, said Jindel.

#### 'CHALLENGING' CLIMATE

FedEx on Thursday said business has been hit by service challenges in Europe and macroeconomic issues in Asia. The region's biggest economy, China, is grappling with COVID-19 lock downs and heat wave-induced power outages.

The warning dragged down shares of rival delivery companies as well as retailers in extended trading. United Parcel Service dropped 5%, while Amazon fell 1.9%.

FedEx expects to report revenue of \$23.2 billion for the first quarter, missing analysts' expectations of \$23.59 billion, according to Refinitiv IBES. Adjusted earnings are expected to be \$3.44 per share, well below estimates of \$5.14.

The company withdrew its forecast for the fiscal year.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 Armenia, Azerbaijan ceasefire still holds</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-azerbaijan-baku-armenia-719a56510651d0ac74d97722a9761d92">https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-azerbaijan-baku-armenia-719a56510651d0ac74d97722a9761d92</a>
GIST	<p>YEREVAN, Armenia (AP) — A cease-fire between Armenia and Azerbaijan was holding for a second day Friday, halting an outburst of fighting that killed more than 200 troops from both sides.</p> <p>The Armenian Defense Ministry said the situation on the border with Azerbaijan has remained quiet since the truce took effect at 8 p.m. Wednesday, and no violations were reported.</p> <p>The cease-fire declaration followed two days of heavy fighting that marked the largest outbreak of hostilities in nearly two years.</p> <p>Armenia and Azerbaijan traded blame for the shelling, with Armenian authorities accusing Baku of unprovoked aggression and Azerbaijani officials saying their country was responding to Armenian attacks.</p>

Speaking in parliament Friday, Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said that at least 135 Armenian troops were killed in the fighting, revising his earlier statement that 105 died in combat. Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry said Thursday it had lost 71.

Edvard Asryan, the chief of the General Staff of the Armenian armed forces, said at a briefing for foreign ambassadors in Yerevan that the Azerbaijani forces had forged 7.5 kilometers (4.7 miles) into Armenian territory near the town of Jermuk, a spa resort in southern Armenia.

Asryan said that the Azerbaijani troops also went 1-2 kilometers (about 1 mile) into Armenian territory near the village of Nerkin Hand in the Syunik province and the village of Shorja in the Gegharkunik province.

He noted that the Azerbaijani forces have remained in those areas.

The ex-Soviet countries have been locked in a decades-old conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, which is part of Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a separatist war there ended in 1994.

During a six-week war in 2020, Azerbaijan reclaimed broad swaths of Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent territories held by Armenian forces. More than 6,700 people died in the fighting, which ended with a Russia-brokered peace agreement. Moscow deployed about 2,000 troops to the region to serve as peacekeepers under the deal.

Pashinyan said his government has asked Russia for military support amid the latest fighting under a friendship treaty, and also requested assistance from the Moscow-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization. The security grouping of ex-Soviet nations responded by deploying a team of top officials to Armenia.

Pashinyan called Russian President Vladimir Putin when the hostilities erupted, and they had another call Friday to discuss the situation.

Yerevan's plea for help has put the Kremlin in a precarious position as it has sought to maintain close relations with Armenia, which hosts a Russian military base, and also develop warm ties with energy-rich Azerbaijan.

Putin on Friday is scheduled to meet with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in the Uzbekistan city of Samarkand. The Russian leader is also set to have talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose country has strongly backed Azerbaijan.

Speaking at the summit, Aliyev accused Armenia of "a large-scale military provocation" that derailed efforts to negotiate a peace treaty. "The Armenian provocation has dealt a heavy blow to the process of normalizing ties between our countries," Aliyev said.

Pashinyan told lawmakers earlier this week that Armenia is ready to recognize Azerbaijan's territorial integrity in a future peace treaty, provided that it relinquishes control of areas in Armenia its forces have seized.

The opposition saw the statement as a sign of Pashinyan's readiness to submit to Azerbaijani demands and recognize Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh. Thousands of angry protesters besieged the government's headquarters and the country's parliament during the past two days, accusing Pashinyan of treason. Protests were also held in other Armenian cities.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/16 France warns on Covid resurgence
SOURCE	<a href="https://news.yahoo.com/frances-health-body-warns-resurgence-104716243.html">https://news.yahoo.com/frances-health-body-warns-resurgence-104716243.html</a>

GIST	<p>PARIS (Reuters) - France's national health body warned on Friday of a resurgence of COVID-19 cases in the country, and urged people to continue to get vaccinated to protect themselves against the virus.</p> <p>The Sante Publique France (SPF) body said that during the week of Sept 5-Sept 11, there had been 186 confirmed COVID cases for every 100,000 people in France - a figure up 12% versus the previous week - representing an average of around 18,000 new cases per day.</p> <p>Earlier this week, Emer Cooke - the executive director for the European Medicines Agency (EMA) watchdog - told a Reuters Next Newsmaker interview that people in Europe should take whatever COVID-19 booster vaccine is available to them, given expectations of an autumn rise in infections.</p> <p>New infections have been steadily rising since 10 days and the seven-day moving average of daily new cases reached an almost five-weeks high of 24,042 on Thursday.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 Prices soaring everywhere</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.barrons.com/news/prices-soaring-everywhere-from-beans-in-brazil-to-pork-in-china-01663321232">https://www.barrons.com/news/prices-soaring-everywhere-from-beans-in-brazil-to-pork-in-china-01663321232</a>
GIST	<p>Consumers and businesses around the world are facing steeper prices for everything from Mexico's beloved tortillas to the aluminium cans used by beer companies.</p> <p>Inflation jumped after countries emerged from Covid lockdowns and it has soared since Russia invaded Ukraine, with the IMF expecting consumer prices to rise by 8.3 percent globally this year.</p> <p>Here is a look at how higher prices are affecting the world:</p> <p>The invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the world's third largest oil producer, sent crude oil prices through the roof.</p> <p>The main international contract, Brent North Sea, almost hit \$140 per barrel, but has now dropped back below \$100.</p> <p>Prices at the pump have followed suit, surging to over two euros per litre in eurozone countries and above five dollars per gallon in the United States, before falling back in recent weeks.</p> <p>Natural gas has also become more expensive, especially in Europe, where electricity prices hit record levels in Germany and France.</p> <p>Energy prices were up 38.3 percent in the eurozone in August from the same month last year.</p> <p>Higher energy prices ripple throughout the economy as they affect the production and transportation costs of companies.</p> <p>The war sent food prices soaring as the war disrupted grain exports from Ukraine, a major supplier of wheat and sunflower oil to countries around the world.</p> <p>In May, Allianz estimated that pasta prices had risen 19 percent in the eurozone over the previous 18 months.</p> <p>In Canada, another large exporter of wheat, a 500-gram package had risen by 60 cents in July from the same month last year, to CAN\$3.16, according to official data.</p> <p>In Thailand, the price for instant noodles, which is controlled by the state, rose for the first time in 14 years in August -- a 17 percent increase to seven bahts (20 US cents).</p>



The price of the corn flour used to make tortillas in Mexico -- a staple used for tacos and other dishes -- is up by around 13 percent from last year and contributing to two-decade high inflation.

Pinto beans, a Brazilian staple, cost nearly 23 percent more in August than at the same time last year.

With grain more expensive, feeding livestock has become costlier and farmers have in turn raised their prices.

Pork, the most popular meat in China, cost 22 percent more in August than last year.

Chinese authorities are considering tapping into their strategic reserves of pork for a second time this year in order to stabilise prices.

In Argentina, ground beef patties are popular as their prices have traditionally been low, but these have shot up by three quarters in the past 12 months.

The country currently has one of the highest inflation rates in the world at 56.4 percent over the first eight months of the year.

In Europe, it is chicken prices that have taken wing as farmers have had to contend with bird flu in addition to cost pressures. Wholesale prices were up by a third in August from the same month last year.

Brewers have been hit with not only rising grain prices, but also for the aluminium cans and glass bottles for their beer.

These are 70 percent more expensive than before the war in Ukraine, according to the trade association of European brewers.

Heineken, the world's second-largest brewery group, hiked its prices by an average of 8.9 percent over the first half of this year.

According to estimates by Bloomberg, AB InBev, the world's top brewer whose beers include Budweiser and Corona, has increased its prices by eight percent.

In Britain, the cost of a pint has risen above four pounds (\$4.6), the highest price since 1987, according to Britain's Office for National Statistics.

Paper prices have climbed as demand has risen following the end of Covid lockdowns. Printing is an energy-intensive process.

Several French dailies raised their prices earlier this year, as have a number British newspapers like the Sun, the Times and Sunday Mail.

Others have reduced their number of pages.

In Europe overall, the prices of newspapers were 6.5 percent higher in July, according to official data.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/16 US disappointed sanctions slow for Russia
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/16/politics/russia-sanctions-ukraine-slow-economic-pain/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/16/politics/russia-sanctions-ukraine-slow-economic-pain/index.html</a>
GIST	WashingtonCNN — Senior US officials tell CNN they are disappointed <a href="#">US-led sanctions</a> haven't had a bigger impact so far on the Russian economy and are now predicting that the harshest effects probably won't materialize until early next year at the earliest.



The hope had been that the sanctions would [quickly choke off Russia's war machine](#) in Ukraine, making it difficult for the Kremlin to sustain its efforts on the battlefield — and perhaps even turn [public opinion against the invasion](#) when day-to-day life in Russian society became uncomfortable.

But the Russian economy has proven far more resilient than many top Biden administration officials had expected when they [set out to punish the country](#) in February, thanks largely to record-setting revenues it has reaped in the spring and summer [from soaring energy prices](#). In the first 100 days of the war, Russia earned a record 93 billion euros in revenue by exporting oil, gas and coal, according to the Finnish Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

Russia's economy still shrunk by about 4% between April and June as compared to the same period last year. But that's nowhere near the 15% decline that some had expected earlier in the year.

"We were expecting that things like SWIFT and all the blocking sanctions on Russia's banks would totally crater the Russian economy and that basically, by now going into September, we'd be dealing with an economically much more weakened Russia than the one that we are dealing with," said one senior US official, referring to the US and European decision to cut some Russian banks off from the SWIFT international banking system.

Another senior US official echoed that, telling CNN that many in the administration had hoped to see the Russian economy suffering more by now, given the unprecedented severity of the coordinated western sanctions.

A separate senior administration official cautioned CNN, however, that the officials crafting the sanctions in the months leading up to the war always believed that the steepest impacts would not necessarily be immediate.

"I think we've had, from the beginning, a view that when Russia invaded Ukraine and we imposed the sanctions, they were going to be, in all likelihood, a mid-to-long term sanctions regime," the official said.

"That is because we wanted to keep pressure on Russia over the long term as it waged war on Ukraine, and we wanted to degrade Russia's economic and industrial capabilities. So we've always **seen** this as a long term game."

The official acknowledged that while there were some "up-front shocks" to the Russian economy, [like when the ruble plunged](#), Russia was able to rally quickly thanks to its energy revenues. Still, this official and western intelligence officials told CNN that they assess that in the long-term, Russia's economy will suffer enormously — both from the cost of the war itself and from western efforts to cut it off from global trade.

"There's going to be long-term damage done to the Russian economy and to generations of Russians as a result of this," CIA Director Bill Burns told a cybersecurity conference last week. "Russia is going to pay a very heavy price, I think, over a long period of time."

### **Slow to target Russian energy**

The disconnect between early expectations and reality appears to stem from the fact that many US and western officials underestimated the [sky-high revenues Russia would initially reap](#) from rising oil prices, and the willingness of countries like China and India to continue buying Russian oil.

And despite being one of the largest oil producers in the world, Saudi Arabia has also begun buying Russian crude — albeit at a discount — for use in its power plants, freeing up its own oil to sell to other countries, an administration official confirmed to CNN.

"The United States underestimated it, and we were slow in actually starting to think about deploying sanctions against Russia energy interests," said Jason Blazakis, a sanctions expert who served as the State Department's Director of the Counterterrorism Finance and Designations Office from 2008-2018.

“I think they made that calculation that these sanctions would have hurt and hurt the Russian economy very quickly, in ways they clearly misunderstood and overestimated,” Blazakis said. “The sanctions certainly have made the Russian economy smaller, but not to the extent people had hoped. And certainly not to the point where the Russians were brought to the bargaining table.”

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February, Europe’s continued dependence on Russian oil and gas imports meant the west was unwilling to immediately sanction Russian energy interests. The US sanctioned executives from major Russian banks, like Gazprombank, but waived sanctions on the bank itself and allowed energy payments to the Russians to continue.

“We had been warning Europe for years before the invasion about the need to get away from Russian energy, and they just weren’t willing to do it until it was too late,” said one of the senior US officials.

Russia has now weaponized its gas supplies, shutting off flows through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline — and Europe is bracing for a potential recession as a result of the energy crisis.

As one response to the energy revenues problem, the European Union agreed over the summer to ban all imports of Russian crude coming in by sea. US officials — concerned that such a ban could cause oil prices to skyrocket even more and bolster Russian revenue for the supplies it does continue to sell — have lobbied for the imposition of a cap on the price of Russian oil.

The EU agreed to a cap in principle earlier this month, but it is still unclear how the measure will be enforced.

### **Signs of strain**

Despite those concerns, US and European officials seem to broadly agree that the boon to the Russian economy stemming from high oil prices is not sustainable in the medium-to-long term, and that the Russian economy could start feeling the worst effects of the sanctions in the first half of 2023.

Some believe the downturn could come sooner, by the end of this year. Export controls have also largely choked off Russia’s ability to manufacture new technology and weapons, and Russia has recently turned to Iran and North Korea for equipment like drones and ammunition.

“We expected the decline might be a little harsher, but they’re masking it,” said a source familiar with western intelligence, explaining that western officials believe the Russians are manipulating statistics and being “held up for now” by high energy prices.

“They can hold on and maintain current government spending levels for probably the next two years,” the source added. “They’ll be running a deficit. But it’s really going to hit society towards the end of the year when it’s not possible to pay people working for companies that have shut down and don’t have stockpiled reserves.”

Another European official echoed that sentiment, telling CNN that intelligence suggests that Russian officials are concerned about how they will sustain the labor market as companies begin going bankrupt.

“This is we always thought that there would be an upfront shock to the Russian economy, Russia would then work to mitigate that, but then there would then be these ongoing drags on the economy and on industrial production, which we are now very much seeing,” the senior administration official told CNN.

“I think with the price cap, we have a very effective path forward to address, you know, the one area where they were kind of able to get some excess benefit because of the higher oil prices,” the official added.

### **Limited options**

Putin spent years amassing hundreds of billions in foreign currency reserves, and Russia's Central Bank has benefited from a talented central banker who has managed to implement workarounds to keep the ruble afloat, officials say.

But all that is doing is creating the appearance of stability, officials said, as western sanctions degrade key sectors of Russia's economy — particularly the technological sector — and GDP continues to shrink. Much of the money Russia holds in foreign banks, moreover, has been frozen since Russia's invasion.

"There is an argument out there that says sanctions failed because they are making cash from oil," said one senior administration official. "But they're making a lot less than they would have a year ago, and Russian oil now makes up nearly the entirety of the Russian economy because of the sanctions imposed already on the other sectors, which are working."

The European official agreed. "The main thing that has kept Putin's regime floating is the high oil price," the official said. "Everything else is freezing or frozen already."

As time goes on, Russian oil production will also decline, the US official predicted, largely because of increased foreign divestiture. Foreign companies have for decades helped maintain Russian oil fields and keep the energy sector efficient — something that Russian companies will struggle to replicate, the US believes.

Russia may turn to China for additional economic assistance in counteracting sanctions. Putin met with his counterpart, President Xi Jinping, at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Uzbekistan this week.

But although China has made legal purchases and offered rhetorical support for Russia, it has so far done nothing to run afoul of western sanctions. And there is no evidence that it is covertly providing any kind of direct assistance to Russia's war efforts.

There are also practical limits to the short-term assistance China can provide. The natural gas pipelines to Asia "can't carry nearly the volume" needed to make up for cutting off sales to Europe for another five years, according to the source familiar with western intelligence.

### **Export controls choking Russian weapons manufacturing**

US and western officials have also sought to use targeted sanctions and export controls as a way to cut Russia off from the technological components it needs to build weapons — items like semiconductors, microchips, aircraft parts and lithium-type batteries.

It is "definitely" working, said the source familiar with western intelligence. US and western officials told CNN that Russia in recent months has been forced to rely on much older weapons and equipment stocks as it has continued to suffer losses on the battlefield that it appears unable to replace.

In one striking example, Russia has been observed using T-64 tanks, a Soviet-era battle tank first introduced in the 1960s.

According to an August report from British defense think tank RUSI, more than 450 foreign-made components had been found in Russian weapons systems recovered in Ukraine, emphasizing the depth of the Russian military's dependence on western technology — and hinting at a potential weakness.

"Since the controls were put in place, global exports of semiconductors to Russia from all sources have declined by almost 90 percent, leaving Russian companies without the chips they need for a wide variety of goods, including weapons like precision guided missiles and tanks," US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said on June 29.

Raimondo has also said that US-led sanctions have forced Russia to use chips from dishwashers and other domestic appliances in some of their military equipment.

The export controls have not stopped Russia from [purchasing weapons and equipment from pariah countries](#) like Iran and North Korea, however. As CNN has previously reported, Russia [purchased weapons-capable drones from Iran](#) over the summer, and is also in the process of purchasing millions of rockets and artillery shells from North Korea for use on the battlefield in Ukraine.

#### Label of last resort

There is also one potentially powerful tool to further degrade Russia's economy that the US has decided to leave on the table: designating Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism. Biden said "no" earlier this month when asked whether his administration would do so.

"To me, that's the thing we are missing," Blazakis said. He noted that the label would broaden the aperture of countries subject to secondary sanctions for doing business with Russia, and lead to more companies de-risking, or terminating, their operations inside Russia.

"Ukraine is one thing," Blazakis said, "but doing business and having your actual brick and mortar operation in a country that is a state sponsor of terror — that invites reputational risks that go beyond I think what we're seeing right now."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Thanksgiving as bad as summer for travel?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2022/09/15/thanksgiving-travel-2022-predictions/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2022/09/15/thanksgiving-travel-2022-predictions/</a>
GIST	<p>When Dennis Shirshikov thinks about Thanksgiving travel, he has flashbacks to this summer. He relives the endless airline delays, the cancellations and the high prices. And he wonders whether the upcoming holiday travel period could be worse than the nightmares of July and August.</p> <p>Remember this summer? Gas prices soared. Airlines canceled <a href="#">just over 2 percent</a> of all domestic flights. It was enough to make anyone stop traveling for good.</p> <p>Shirshikov flew his family from New York to Albuquerque this spring, and he says it was a hassle and was overpriced. So for Thanksgiving, he's driving from New York to Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to visit relatives. With three kids younger than 5, he'll be making frequent stops and staying in hotels.</p> <p>"Flights were out of the question," says Shirshikov, who runs a real estate investment firm in New York City. "Gas prices are definitely a concern. We're a bit worried about any looming health issues and would gladly forfeit the money we have already spent on the trip if it meant keeping everyone healthier."</p> <p>Many travelers have already started to wonder whether this fall will be a repeat of summer, with high fares and numerous cancellations. And what about gas prices, which peaked around the height of the summer travel season?</p> <p>Travel insurance expert Chiranth Nataraj predicts that the number of air travelers will return to 2019 levels this Thanksgiving. But Nataraj, president and CEO of <a href="#">International Services</a> and founder <a href="#">Visitor Guard</a>, says it will be anything but business as usual. With airlines continuing to experience staff shortages and other operational problems, he expects more flight cancellations than last Thanksgiving.</p> <p>"Covid will also play a big role this Thanksgiving and cause medical uncertainty for many travelers," Nataraj says.</p> <p>That said, fall travel won't be an unwanted summer-travel sequel, according to Michael Taylor, managing director for travel, hospitality and retail at J.D. Power, a marketing research firm. It will be more of a spinoff.</p>

“This past summer was characterized by sustained demand that didn’t seem to be blunted by increased ticket, room or car rental charges,” he says. “Thanksgiving travel is very date-specific. And airlines will better understand what the current system can handle versus what happened this past summer.”

Experts predict that gas prices will hold steady. The [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#) forecasts retail gasoline prices will average \$3.60 per gallon in the fourth quarter and \$3.61 per gallon in 2023.

But airfares will remain high. The airfare app [Hopper](#) sees [the average domestic round-trip airfare hitting \\$373](#) in November, up 24 percent from 2019, the last year before the pandemic. You may find some lower fares if you book earlier in the fall, but prices are rising fast from the average of \$286 in August. Hotel rates will also remain stubbornly high. Hopper says average room rates this fall (\$217 per night) are 28 percent higher than in 2019.

This isn’t the year to wait for a last-minute deal, says Christina Tunnah, general manager for the Americas for travel insurance company [World Nomads](#). “Don’t try to outsmart the market,” she says. “The cheapest time to book is always in the past.”

So in terms of pricing, it’ll be almost as challenging as the summer — excluding gas prices. But it depends on where you want to go.

“The cost of air and lodging will be at the summer levels for the most popular destinations, such as Mexico and the Caribbean,” says Peter Vlitaz, executive vice president for partner relations at [Internova Travel Group](#). But Europe will cost considerably less than it did last summer because of lower demand.

It’s not going to be just another Thanksgiving. Even the last “normal” Thanksgiving in 2019 was different, says Matthew Colbert, founder of [Empire Aviation Services](#). Back then, planes were full, but flights were plentiful.

He cautions that if you treat this holiday like previous Thanksgivings, you’ll be in trouble. “It’s a short, intense holiday and travel period — and any hiccup can cause a big headache. Travelers need to leave extra time on either end of the trip to get where they’re going and back again.”

Baruch Silvermann, CEO of [the Smart Investor](#), says travelers overpaid for their airline tickets this summer. Worse, they were on uncomfortably crowded flights.

But there are ways to make Thanksgiving travel less frenetic — and less expensive.

“If you can travel before the holiday rush or plan to return the following Tuesday or Wednesday, you can reduce the risks of packed flights where you could easily get bumped,” he says.

[Research](#) by the online travel agency [CheapAir](#) suggests that you should avoid the Saturday and Sunday before Thanksgiving (Nov. 19 and 20) and Saturday and Sunday after the holiday (Nov. 26 and 27). The least expensive days to fly are Thanksgiving and Black Friday.

How do you clear those Thanksgiving travel hurdles? If you’re flying, you could do what travel adviser Andrew Steinberg is doing for his clients: Hire an airport greeter to whisk you through the chaos. An airport concierge can find a faster way through security or a shortcut to your gate or airline club. The services start at about \$100 per person. “With cancellations, lost luggage and overall confusion, it is worth the cost to have on-the-ground support to help smooth out any potential concerns — especially internationally,” says Steinberg, who works for [Ovation Networks](#).

Maybe you can’t escape the high prices or the cancellations this Thanksgiving, but you can get away from the crowds. Consider America’s perennial favorite Thanksgiving destination for the past six years running, according to a survey [Allianz Partners USA](#). “Since the survey’s inception in 2016, Allianz has found that the number one U.S. city Americans head to for Thanksgiving festivities is New York City,” says Daniel Durazo, an Allianz spokesman.

Maybe Shirshikov is making a smart move by taking advantage of lower gas prices — and leaving the Manhattan crowds behind.

#### PLEASE NOTE

Potential travelers should take local and national public health directives regarding the pandemic into consideration before planning any trips. Travel health notice information can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's interactive map showing travel recommendations by [destination](#) and the CDC's [travel health notice webpage](#).

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Strike averted, but crisis far from over
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wired.com/story/a-us-rail-strike-was-averted-but-the-crisis-is-far-from-over/">https://www.wired.com/story/a-us-rail-strike-was-averted-but-the-crisis-is-far-from-over/</a>
GIST	<p><b>IN THE EARLY</b> hours of Thursday morning, major US freight railroad companies reached a tentative agreement with unions, narrowly averting a nationwide rail shutdown less than 24 hours before a strike deadline. A work stoppage would have heaped <a href="#">devastating consequences on the nation's economy and supply chain</a>, nearly 30 percent of which relies on rail. Even a near miss had some impact. Long-distance Amtrak passenger services, which use freight tracks, and hazardous materials shipments are now being restored after railroads suspended them to prevent people or cargo becoming stranded by a strike.</p> <p>The tentative agreement, to be voted on by union members, came through talks brokered by the Biden administration. It scrambled this week to avoid a shutdown that would have caused major disruption and worsened inflation by restricting the supply of crucial goods and driving up shipping costs. Rail unions and the railroad industry association released statements Thursday welcoming the deal. But freight rail service has been unreliable <a href="#">since long before this week's standoff</a>, and trade groups representing rail customers say much work remains to restore it to acceptable levels.</p> <p><a href="#">Just two-thirds</a> of trains were arriving within 24 hours of their scheduled time this spring, down from 85 percent pre-pandemic, forcing rail customers to suspend business or—grimly—<a href="#">consider euthanizing</a> their starving chickens. Scott Jensen, a spokesperson for the American Chemistry Council, whose members depend on rail to ship chemicals, called the latest shutdown threat “another ugly chapter in this long saga of freight rail issues.”</p> <p>Although Thursday's agreement was lauded by companies dependent on rail freight, the ACC, the National Grain and Feed Association, and other trade groups also argue that further reforms to the rail industry are needed. Competition has dwindled as service concentrated among a handful of big railroads, which slashed their combined workforce by 29 percent over the past six years. Rail customers <a href="#">have asked</a> lawmakers and rail regulators to intervene. Suggestions include federal minimum service standards, including penalties for leaving loaded cars sitting in rail yards for long periods, and a rule that would allow customers to move cargo to another service provider at certain interchanges, to work around the fact that many customers are captive to a single carrier.</p> <p>Major US freight railroads made deep staff cuts in recent years as part of an effort to implement a leaner, more profitable operating model called Precision Scheduled Railroading. Profits have indeed soared—two of the largest freight carriers, Union Pacific and BNSF, owned by Warren Buffett, broke records last year. But after many workers decided not to return to the rail industry after pandemic furloughs, a staffing shortage tipped the network into crisis. At federal hearings this spring, rail customers complained about suffering their worst ever service levels from a network that had been stripped of its resiliency.</p> <p>Many freight rail jobs have always involved erratic schedules and long stretches away from home, but workers complained that the leaner operations saddled them with still longer hours, higher injury rates, and less predictable schedules. Many workers received no sick leave and were penalized for taking time off outside of their vacation time, which averaged three weeks a year, or holiday and personal time, which reached 14 days a year for the most senior employees.</p>

Earlier this year, BNSF implemented a stricter, [points-based attendance policy](#) that penalized workers for absences regardless of the reason, hoping to get maximum staffing out of its smaller workforce. Other railroads also tightened their attendance policies. Because many rail workers must remain on call around the clock, that meant an emergency or routine doctor's appointment could cost someone their job. [700 employees quit](#) after BNSF changed its policy, according to two unions representing engineers and conductors, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers (SMART-TD).

Time off for medical care was the final sticking point during this week's union negotiations. The tentative agreement provides an additional paid day off, plus clearance to take time off without penalty for doctor's appointments, hospitalizations, and surgeries. Workers will also receive raises equivalent to 24 percent over five years and keep their current health insurance.

The preliminary deal offers workers significantly more than recommended last month by a presidential emergency board attempting to resolve the dispute. In the absence of any voluntary agreement between unions and railroads, Congress could have imposed the board's recommendations to avoid a strike, but doing so would have deprived workers of the ability to bargain for improvements and vote on an agreement.

For the tentative agreement to become final it must be backed by a simple majority of the 57,000 members of BLET and SMART-TD. The two unions have agreed not to strike in the interim. Eight other unions had reached preliminary agreements with the railroads before Thursday's eleventh-hour talks, but would have respected a picket line in the event that any one union struck.

Rick Paterson, a rail analyst at the investment firm Loop Capital Markets, says the agreement should prevent more workers from abandoning the railroads than if Congress had forced the PEB recommendations on them. "A surge in attrition on the back of this agreement is now probably a low probability." Railroads say they're hiring aggressively, but the challenges of improving service with a still-depleted workforce linger.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Suicide prevention emergency responders
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hstoday.us/fema-dhs-federal-pages/suicide-prevention-resources-for-emergency-responders/">https://www.hstoday.us/fema-dhs-federal-pages/suicide-prevention-resources-for-emergency-responders/</a>
GIST	<p>Suicide in the emergency services is more prevalent than in the general population.</p> <p><b>Statistics show:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public safety personnel are 5 times more likely to suffer symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression than their civilian counterparts, leading to higher rates of suicide.</li><li>More first responders die of suicide than in the line of duty each year.</li></ul> <p>These statistics are from a <a href="#">May 2022 Ruderman Family Foundation report</a>. The Foundation's 2018 white paper also had the same findings.</p> <p><b>Resources for emergency responders</b></p> <p>In 2022, several new programs and resources are available help address the issue of emergency responder suicide:</p> <p><b>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline</b></p> <p>The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has a 3-digit hotline number: 988. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) created a <a href="#">988 Partner Toolkit</a> for consistent messaging about how the new hotline will work. The lifeline can still be reached at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).</p> <p><b>Extended Public Safety Officers' benefits</b></p>



	<p>The Public Safety Officer Support Act was signed into law, expanding the death and disability benefits under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits program. The law recognizes first responder work-related suicides as line-of-duty deaths and now extends benefits to the families of first responders who die by suicide and to responders who have been disabled by traumatic experiences like mass shootings or mass casualty incidents.</p> <p><b>Wildland firefighter messaging</b></p> <p>In recognition of Suicide Prevention Week, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's (NWCG's) Mental Health Subcommittee released <a href="#">messaging to support wildland firefighter health and well-being</a>. The messages encourage learning new ways for maintaining mental health and wellness.</p> <p><b>Directory of behavioral health professionals</b></p> <p>The National Volunteer Fire Council's (NVFC's) <a href="#">Share the Load Support Program</a> for fire and EMS offers a continually updated directory of behavioral health professionals. These professionals are vetted by the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance (FBHA) as either having firsthand experience with the fire and emergency services or who have completed a training course through the FBHA to educate them on specific challenges faced by the fire service. Additionally, the NVFC course, "Preventing and Coping with Suicide in the Fire and Emergency Services," is available (free of charge for NVFC members).</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<a href="#">Read more at U.S. Fire Administration</a>

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Cop claims she can drive 90mph</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kptv.com/2022/09/15/washington-officer-tells-tiktok-shes-allowed-drive-90-mph-gets-suspended/">https://www.kptv.com/2022/09/15/washington-officer-tells-tiktok-shes-allowed-drive-90-mph-gets-suspended/</a>
GIST	<p>FEDERAL WAY Wash. (KPTV) - In July, a Washington police officer posted a <a href="#">TikTok</a> video that made headlines and rubbed some viewers the wrong way. The Federal Way Police Department then suspended her for 10 hours without pay.</p> <p>While the officer has since removed the video from the platform, a Reddit user was able to obtain a copy of it. In a now-viral post, they restarted the conversation about this officer's behavior.</p> <p>In the video, Federal Way police officer Breanna Straus advises motorists on what to do if they spot a police car on the road.</p> <p>"If we're driving on the freeway in our police car, get the f--k out of the way," she said, adding "I can go 90 miles an hour, you can't. You can't do that. So get the f--k out of the way. If us officers stay behind you long enough, we can find a reason to pull you over."</p> <p>Some people saw it as implying that police are exempt from the law and do not have to follow it. Others found it alarming because she claimed police could "find" a pretext to stop people. Some people believed she was misusing her position of authority.</p> <p>The Federal Way Police Department launched an investigation following the video, according to <a href="#">Seattle Weekly</a>.</p> <p>She ended up receiving a 10-hour unpaid suspension for posting the video. Equal to one shift.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 Zambia faces economic collapse</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/16/zambia-debt-lenders-urged-to-cancel">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/16/zambia-debt-lenders-urged-to-cancel</a>
GIST	<p>More than 100 economists and academics have urged international lenders to <a href="#">crisis-stricken Zambia</a> to write off a significant slice of their loans during financial restructuring talks this month.</p> <p>Zambia is seeking up to \$8.4bn (£7.3bn) in debt relief from major lenders, <a href="#">including private funds run by the world's largest investment manager, BlackRock</a>, to help put its public finances back in order.</p>

In the run-up to what are understood to be tense negotiations involving the Chinese, French and British governments, the anti-poverty charity Debt Justice said that only a major debt write-off could save the Zambian economy from complete collapse.

Led by the Columbia University economist, Jeffrey Sachs, and [Jayati Ghosh](#), the chair of the Centre for Economic Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, the 100-plus global group of economists and experts said in a letter to the creditors' negotiating committee that Zambia should be given a waiver from debt interest payments due until 2023.

Earlier this month, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) [approved a \\$1.3bn loan to the country](#), which defaulted on its \$17.3bn of external debt after a collapse in its public finances during the pandemic.

Funds run by BlackRock are among the largest private owners of Zambia's bonds, holding \$220m. Some are worth almost half the value they were sold at. Eurobonds worth \$1bn that mature in 2024 plunged 6.3% in the last week to less than 56% of their face value.

Debt Justice, formerly known as the Jubilee Debt Campaign, has estimated that BlackRock could make 110% profit for itself and its clients from Zambia if debt interest payments are paid in full. The country has three main private sector bonds that pay an average 8.1% in interest.

The letter said: "Because of the high interest rates and the fact Zambia's bonds have been trading at well below face value since 2018, many bondholders stand to make huge profits at the expense of both Zambian citizens and creditor countries if paid at face value.

"It is therefore imperative that BlackRock and other bondholders agree to fully engage in a large-scale debt restructuring, including significant haircuts, in order to make Zambia's debt sustainable."

Tim Jones, the charity's policy head, said the IMF loan gave the country some breathing space, but the \$8.4bn of interest payments due over the next couple of years should be "cancelled permanently, not rolled over to the 2030s to fuel another debt crisis next decade".

Chad and Ethiopia applied last year for debt relief under the G20's common framework, but Jones said negotiations have yet to get off the starting blocks. [Sri Lanka](#) and [Bangladesh](#) have also asked for bailouts under IMF schemes to support countries devastated by the climate crisis.

Zambia, which has cut health and social care spending by a fifth in the past two years to balance its budget, has seen its [debts soar in recent years](#) to fund infrastructure projects, many to help the country supplement drought-affected hydropower plants.

Solar energy projects have made the country almost self-sufficient in electricity, but the high cost of borrowing, local corruption and the coronavirus crisis have crippled the country's finances.

Further loans from the IMF have been tied to commitments to end fuel subsidies to households and businesses, pushing the inflation rate above 20% last year before it eased to 9.8% in August.

Of Zambia's external debt, 46% is owed to private lenders, 22% to China, 8% to other governments and 18% to multilateral institutions. China is among the government lenders to agree a longer debt repayment schedule that private lenders, including banks, have so far resisted, Debt Justice said.

A BlackRock spokesperson said it wanted "a sustainable long-term outcome for Zambia" but disputed the charity's claim it would profit from a rescheduling of debt interest payments, saying it was likely to make losses when the bondholdings mature.

It said: "We regard it as our obligation to play our part responsibly, alongside all other creditors, in ensuring there is a path towards a sustainable outcome for sovereign debt issuers in distress.

	<p>“As an asset manager, we are a fiduciary to our clients, people from all walks of life. The money we invest on their behalf is not our own and we are obligated to act in our clients’ best financial interests at all times.”</p> <p>Jones said BlackRock had likely bought Zambian bonds at rock-bottom prices when it was clear the country was already in trouble.</p> <p>The Zambian Civil Society Debt Alliance, Global Justice Now, Action for Southern <a href="#">Africa</a> (ACTSA), Christian Aid, Cafod and Jubilee Scotland are also campaigning for BlackRock and other private lenders to cancel the debt.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 Germany trusteeship Russia oil refineries</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/germany-takes-control-of-oil-refineries-owned-by-russias-rosneft-11663315592?mod=hp_lead_pos3">https://www.wsj.com/articles/germany-takes-control-of-oil-refineries-owned-by-russias-rosneft-11663315592?mod=hp_lead_pos3</a>
GIST	<p>BERLIN—Germany took control of the German business of Russian oil giant Rosneft Oil Co. as Berlin races to safeguard its energy supplies before its planned ban on Russian oil imports kicks in later this year.</p> <p>The German government said it would place Rosneft’s German subsidiaries under trusteeship. The business’s flagship asset is the PCK refinery in Schwedt, eastern Germany, that provides Berlin and the surrounding region with much of its gasoline and aircraft fuel. Rosneft’s Germany assets make up a total of around 12% of the country’s oil-processing capacity, making it one of the largest oil-processing companies in the country.</p> <p>“The trusteeship counteracts the impending threat to the security of the energy supply and lays an important foundation for the preservation and future of Schwedt,” the economy ministry said Friday.</p> <p>The step marks an escalation in the economic standoff with Russia as Germany seeks to decouple itself from decades of reliance on Moscow’s prolific energy exports. It is the second major Russian energy asset that the German government is taking over in the wake of the Ukraine invasion. Berlin put Gazprom PJSC’s German natural-gas business, formerly known as Gazprom Germania GmbH, under trusteeship in April.</p> <p>The move raises questions as to whether Schwedt will continue to receive Russian oil. Without supplies, the refinery would only have reserves for about three weeks, a senior PCK manager said. After that, the German capital’s fuel supplies could run short.</p> <p>Existing pipelines can supply Schwedt with non-Russian oil, but not enough to allow the refinery to operate at capacity, the manager said. Expanding the pipelines’ capacity would cost hundreds of millions of euros and take up to three years, the PCK manager said.</p> <p>A senior German official denied this was the case and said that the refinery would be supplied via pipelines leading to the port cities of Rostock in northeastern Germany and Gdansk in Poland.</p> <p>Berlin was initially reluctant to take control of the Rosneft business but moved after Western sanctions against Russia led some banks and IT firms to stop doing business with the company, making it impossible for the refinery to continue operating, officials said, even though Rosneft isn’t sanctioned.</p> <p>Berlin has also intervened <a href="#">to support other energy companies</a> hammered by high natural-gas prices, including by agreeing to take a 30% stake in <a href="#">embattled energy supplierUniper SE</a> as part of a bailout package. The company and the government are currently discussing increasing that stake to a majority.</p> <p>Gazprom announced <a href="#">an indefinite halt to natural-gas flows</a> via the Nord Stream pipeline to Germany earlier this month in what European officials have called an economic attack to punish the West for its</p>

	<p>support for Ukraine. Moscow insists that the move was the result of technical problems caused by sanctions placed on Russia.</p> <p>On Friday, the economy ministry said Rosneft’s German subsidiaries, which include three refineries in total, were placed under trusteeship of the Federal Network Agency, the country’s energy regulator. The ministry said that the Rosneft subsidiaries imported crude oil worth several hundred million euros from Russia to Germany every month.</p> <p>The landlocked Schwedt refinery, located near the Polish border, is one of Germany’s largest and has received its crude from Russia via the Druzhba pipeline—Russian for friendship—since the plant was opened in the 1960s. Germany is set to stop importing Russian crude later this year as part of the European Union’s ban on Russian oil.</p> <p>The Schwedt refinery was the biggest obstacle to Germany accepting the ban on Russian oil imports because thousands of jobs in the region depend on it.</p> <p>The Kremlin-controlled Rosneft didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment. In August, the Russian company warned that replacing Russian oil at its German refinery would cause fuel prices to jump in Germany.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Railroad strike averted in tentative deal</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-railroad-strike-averted-as-white-house-unions-reach-tentative-deal-11663234424?mod=hp_lead_pos13">https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-railroad-strike-averted-as-white-house-unions-reach-tentative-deal-11663234424?mod=hp_lead_pos13</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON—The biggest freight railroads and union leaders reached a tentative labor agreement to avert a nationwide strike that <a href="#">would have crippled</a> segments of the U.S. economy.</p> <p>President Biden and White House officials interceded to broker a deal to avoid transport disruptions that could have snarled supply chains, putting new pressure on prices when inflation has been hovering <a href="#">near four-decade highs</a>. Business groups and key rail customers, such as energy companies and national retailers, had been calling on the government to avoid a strike.</p> <p>“This agreement is a big win for America,” Mr. Biden said in the White House Rose Garden on Thursday. “This is a win for tens of thousands of rail workers and their dignity.”</p> <p>“This agreement is validation of what I’ve always believed: Unions and management can work together,” he added.</p> <p>The overall <a href="#">U.S. job market is tight</a>, with wages rising and unemployment low, and the railroads struggling with service issues they say have been caused by worker shortages. Union members had been working without a contract since 2019 and labor leaders had used the negotiations to protest new attendance policies some of the companies had adopted.</p> <p>Both sides said Thursday they wrung concessions from the negotiations, which produced a deal that runs through 2024. The terms largely reflected a proposal put forth by a federal panel a month ago, including about 24% in wage increases over five years. The tentative agreement must now be ratified by members of the various unions covered by the contracts.</p> <p>The deal, which is retroactive to 2019, includes a 14.1% wage increase upon ratification. Workers would then get a 4% raise in July 2023 and 4.5% increase in July 2024, as well as five annual \$1,000 lump-sum payments. There are no changes to health insurance copays or deductibles in the new deal.</p> <p>Amtrak said Thursday it was restoring long-distance train services that <a href="#">it had suspended</a> ahead of the Friday deadline for a possible strike. Those intercity trains run on tracks owned and operated by freight railroads.</p>

The freight railroads, including Norfolk Southern Corp. and Union Pacific Corp., said Thursday they were pleased to avert a work stoppage and were restoring services they had suspended this week so the cargoes wouldn't get stuck in their networks in the event of a strike.

Norfolk Southern said it had reopened intermodal yards, which transfer shipping containers, it had closed on Wednesday and was again accepting all types of cargo. Union Pacific said that it has also canceled embargoes on hazardous material and sensitive cargo, and that it is working with its customers to address any backlog.

Two unions that had held out for better terms—the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, and SMART-Transportation Division—said Thursday they were able to secure changes. “For the first time, our unions were able to obtain negotiated contract language exempting time off for certain medical events from carrier attendance policies,” the unions said.

U.S. railroads have introduced attendance policies with points systems, as part of efforts to reduce absences over the past year. The new labor agreement states that employees won't be penalized for scheduled medical appointments, but unscheduled sick days will still result in penalties.

Rail companies balked at a proposal by some unions for 15 paid sick days a year. The agreement allows for one additional paid day off, on top of existing paid time off—in keeping with what the federal mediation panel had recommended.

Unions had sought raises of 31% over the five-year term of the contract, while railroads offered 17% before the presidential panel drafted a proposed compromise last month. In the previous five-year contract, wage increases amounted to around 13%.

The annual wage increases in the new contract range from 3% to 7%. “It's higher than it had been in the past, but so is inflation right now and so are rail earnings,” said Tony Hatch, a transportation analyst at ABH Consulting.

Nationally, average hourly earnings for nonmanagerial employees were up 6.1% in August from a year before, about the same pace in recent months, according to the Labor Department. That is below the [8.3% annual inflation rate](#) last month.

The contracts cover more than 115,000 workers in a variety of occupations at several railroads across the country. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the annual average wage of a railroad conductor or a yardmaster was around \$68,000 as of 2021.

Employees covered in this round of bargaining have average annual compensation of \$122,000 a year, including healthcare and employer retirement contributions, according to the National Railway Labor Conference, which represents the railroads.

Railroad executives have said in recent earnings calls that they have set aside funds for wage increases. “We have accrued a level of back wages that reflects our efforts to keep our craft workers amongst the highest paid in any industry,” said Mark George, chief financial officer of Norfolk Southern in July.

Shares of Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern rose slightly Thursday, while shares of [CSX Corp.](#) fell 3%. CSX on Thursday morning [named a new chief executive](#). The fourth major U.S. railroad, BNSF, is owned by Warren Buffett's conglomerate [Berkshire Hathaway Inc.](#)

Leaders of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, whose members on Wednesday rejected a version of the deal, said Thursday they would work on a revision to put to a member vote. Of the 12 unions that have reached tentative agreements with the railroads, two have ratified them with their membership.

Asked about rank-and-file union members who expressed early frustration with the agreement on Facebook and other public platforms because it didn't include more paid sick leave, Labor Secretary Marty Walsh said, "You can't base what's going to happen on social media."

"When you look at the totality of the contract, it's a good contract," he said in an interview.

The railroad talks are the latest example of employees demanding improved working conditions and better staffing, said Arthur Wheaton, director of labor studies at Cornell University. "It's not all about the money," Mr. Wheaton said. "Nobody wants to be on call seven days a week, 24 hours a day."

Over the past year, [labor shortages](#) in many industries have caused businesses to require many workers to take on added responsibilities, while also giving employees more leverage over their bosses and leading [many to form labor unions](#) seeking better working conditions and [higher pay](#).

In Minnesota, about 15,000 [nurses went on strike](#) earlier this week, saying they were partly concerned that inadequate staffing had forced them to juggle too many patients at the same time. Employees at [Starbucks](#) Corp. stores around the country have formed unions in part [to seek increased wages and staffing](#).

Railroad companies have been particularly stung by a labor shortage in recent years. Many workers never returned after the railroads furloughed thousands of people early in the pandemic. At the same time, a burst in consumer demand for goods put more stress on supply chains.

That prompted the railroad companies to put more onerous attendance requirements on the remaining workers, union leaders and members said, which in turn led more workers to quit. Roughly 146,400 people worked for railroads in August of this year, down from 172,500 in the same month in 2019, according to the Labor Department.

If the talks had broken down and led to a strike, Congress could have intervened to delay or stop any strike. But White House officials were reluctant to call on Congress to step in to extend the deadline for the negotiations or force a resolution to the dispute.

Administration officials began ratcheting up their engagement with union and rail representatives last week, but there was minimal progress, according to senior administration officials. On Monday night, the administration asked union and labor officials to reach an agreement by 5 p.m. on Tuesday or be prepared to come to Washington.

Mr. Walsh, a former Boston mayor and union leader, summoned both sides on Wednesday for in-person negotiations. Administration officials said there were several moments throughout the marathon 20-hour negotiations where it looked like they had reached an impasse, with tensions spiking between the two sides, particularly on the issue of how to address employee attendance.

In a brief call to the negotiators on Wednesday night, Mr. Biden stressed the importance of worker dignity, contending that he understood why the unions were pushing so hard. But he also underscored the gravity of the situation, telling the negotiators that failure was unacceptable, the officials said.

Mr. Walsh alerted the White House at around 2 a.m. Thursday morning that he thought they had a deal, the officials said. Officials rushed to get buy-in from key stakeholders, waking up union board members in the middle of the night to get approval, the officials said.

"The rail system literally is the backbone of the nation," Mr. Biden said in a brief appearance in the Oval Office on Thursday with the negotiators. "It's just critical in keeping the economy moving."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 KC Metro 'workforce shortage' cuts trips
SOURCE	<a href="https://mynorthwest.com/3635968/metro-cancels-262-trips-service-reductions-workforce-shortage/">https://mynorthwest.com/3635968/metro-cancels-262-trips-service-reductions-workforce-shortage/</a>



GIST	<p>Starting Saturday, Sept. 17, King County Metro buses will be making 250+ fewer trips getting people to work, attend school, out to bars and restaurants, or visit family during the week.</p> <p>The change comes as a part of Metro’s semi-annual service change, which they do to “improve reliability and to better meet rider needs,” Al Sanders a Public Information Officer with King County Metro said.</p> <p>Roughly 260-weekday trips have been deleted, with King County Metros citing its attempts to “address workforce shortages,” a line that has been repeated across industries as businesses try to get workers, especially low-wage, hourly workers, back in key positions.</p> <p>The trips do not affect weekend trips, which will continue to operate as before.</p> <p>Last year, <a href="#">MyNorthwest reported</a> on the cancellation of 26 trip cancellations, calling it an “unusually high number of cancellations,” a number which is only a tenth of the current cancellation.</p> <p>In the <a href="#">released update</a>, details were included about how 69 routes would be adjusted, a vast majority of which had their service reduced. Out of the 162 routes that Metro runs, 58 are being reduced, with the Rapid Ride C reduced by 19 trips.</p> <p>The updated service also adjusts for the opening of the West Seattle Bridge, which has been closed for more than two years and will once again allow drivers the day after the service changes, Sunday, Sept. 18. Only one route, Route 303 from North Seattle to First Hill, will add any trips, with one additional weekday trip that officials say will “improve the span of service between routes 302 and 303.”</p> <p>“Service levels following Sept. 17 will be comparable to where they are now. The minor updates in this semi-annual service change are trip-specific adjustments to improve reliability and to better meet rider needs,” Sanders wrote in a statement. “We’re especially committed to providing service to customers who count on Metro to get to their jobs every day or for other needs.”</p> <p>Metro has said that they expect an uptick in ridership as students return to schools now that the <a href="#">teacher’s strike has ended</a>, <a href="#">Seahawks</a> and <a href="#">Mariners</a> seasons get into full swing, and people learn more about the new <a href="#">Free Youth Transit Pass</a> system.</p> <p>Metro currently has 2,500 bus operators and they are looking to hire an additional 62 full-time equivalents, a mix of part-time and full-time operators in order to get to the staffing levels needed to operate the bus transit system.</p> <p>“We’re facing the same staffing challenges that all industries are currently dealing with,” Sanders said. “There are no extraordinary issues facing Metro in terms of hiring and we’re encouraging those interested in working for a great agency to go to <a href="https://kingcounty.gov/MetroCareers">kingcounty.gov/MetroCareers</a> for more information.”</p> <p>The schedule is likely to continue until the next service update, set to happen in March 2023, but the trip cancellations are currently listed as “indefinably.”</p> <p>A full list of service changes, including the new schedule for the updated routes can be found on the <a href="#">King County Metro website</a>.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Covid in seniors linked to Alzheimer’s risk</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/09/15/covid-alzheimers-disease-case-western-reserve/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/09/15/covid-alzheimers-disease-case-western-reserve/</a>
GIST	A study using the electronic health records of more than 6 million Americans over age 65, found those who had covid-19 ran a greater risk of receiving a new diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease within a year.



The [study](#), led by researchers at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease, does not show that covid-19 causes Alzheimer's, but adds to [a growing body of work](#) suggesting links between the two.

The results suggest researchers should be tracking older patients who recover from covid to see if they go on to show signs of memory loss, declining brain function or Alzheimer's disease. The study found that for every 1,000 seniors with covid-19, seven will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's within a year, slightly above the five-in-a-thousand diagnosis rate for seniors who did not have covid.

"We know that covid can affect the brain, but I don't think anyone had looked at new diagnoses of Alzheimer's," said Pamela Davis, one of the study's co-authors and a research professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Colleague Rong Xu said she had expected to see some increase among seniors sickened by covid, but was surprised "by the extent of the increase and how rapidly it occurred."

The study, though "important and useful" was "limited," said Gabriel de Erausquin, director of the Laboratory of Brain Development, Modulation and Repair at University of Texas Health San Antonio, who was not involved in the research.

He cautioned that a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease is not necessarily confirmation of the disease. Doctors sometimes diagnose Alzheimer's based on changes in behavior, or responses to a memory test. These are considered less accurate than imaging or spinal fluid tests that measure two types of proteins, beta-amyloid and phosphorylated tau, which accumulate abnormally in the brains of people with Alzheimer's. Brain scans that look for structural changes, such as the shrinking of certain regions, are another more accurate indicator.

"You have people who very much look like they have Alzheimer's, but they do not have Alzheimer's," said de Erausquin, adding, "People who have long covid are at risk of being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease."

In their paper, the Case Western Reserve researchers acknowledged that the study was limited by the potential for inaccurate diagnoses of Alzheimer's.

Davis, however, said she thinks it is unlikely doctors would mistake long covid for Alzheimer's.

"To label somebody with Alzheimer's disease is different from the brain fog and the confusion associated with long covid," she said. "When a physician makes a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, it represents a substantial cognitive impairment."

The Case Western Reserve study used a database representing patients from almost 70 health care centers across the country. The scientists focused on patients over 65 who made a medical visit during a 15-month period from Feb. 2, 2020 to May 30, 2021, dividing them into two groups: those diagnosed with covid-19, and those with no covid diagnosis.

Through much of the study period, the electronic record system did not include a code for long covid, leaving open the possibility that patients who had continuing health problems after their bout with covid may have been misdiagnosed with Alzheimer's.

Still, the new study adds to a growing body of research examining the relationship between covid-19 and Alzheimer's disease. An earlier study by some of the same researchers at Case Western Reserve examined the electronic health records of almost 62 million Americans over age 18 and found that patients with dementia had a significantly higher risk for covid-19 than patients without dementia.

Thomas Wisniewski, director of the NYU Langone Alzheimer's Disease Center, raised the possibility that some patients may already be on their way to Alzheimer's when they get covid-19, causing their brains "to take a second hit."

	<p>He said scientists need to look at whether Alzheimer’s biomarkers that appear in covid-19 patients “stay increased over time, and do they result in a faster disease trajectory?”</p> <p>Scientists at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons studied the brains of a small number of deceased covid-19 patients and found they had defective receptors considered to be an indicator of Alzheimer’s disease.</p> <p>A second study looked at the serum, a component of blood, from hospitalized covid-19 patients with no prior history of dementia and they had developed markers of neurodegenerative disease at comparable levels to those found in Alzheimer’s disease patients.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Russia mercenaries recruit from prisons</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/15/russia-war-mercenearies-prisons-recruit/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/15/russia-war-mercenearies-prisons-recruit/</a>
GIST	<p>To address Russia’s shortage of soldiers to send to war in Ukraine, the <a href="#">Wagner mercenary group</a> seems to be making an offer that it hopes convicted criminals can’t refuse: a get out of jail card.</p> <p>“After six months [at war] you receive a pardon, and there is no option for you to return to prison,” a man dressed in tan-colored fatigues said, addressing a crowd of Russian inmates standing underneath a poster that read “Choose life.” “Those who arrive [at the front line] and say on Day 1 it’s not for them get shot,” the man added.</p> <p>The recording pitch, captured on video, surfaced Monday night on Russian Telegram channels, and the man in fatigues making the offer appears to be Yevgeniy Prigozhin, the billionaire nicknamed “Putin’s chef” who is also the reputed financier of the Wagner private military company.</p> <p>With Russian President Vladimir Putin refusing to declare a national draft, fearing such a move would be politically toxic, Wagner has been playing an increasingly crucial and public role in Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>It is not clear when the video was filmed, but it appears to provide the first on-record evidence of a recruitment strategy that has been rumor for months: soliciting prisoners to trade prison garb for military uniforms as a way of replenishing Russia’s ranks on the battlefield.</p> <p>Russia’s shortage of reinforcements was apparently part of the reason Moscow’s troops were unprepared for a Ukrainian counteroffensive in recent days that ousted Russian occupying fosters from most of the northeast Kharkiv region. The successful Ukrainian counteroffensive has only added to Russia’s woes, with some analysts saying Russia is no longer capable of offensive operations, but can only defend the territory it now controls.</p> <p>Prigozhin, whose chef nickname comes from the lucrative catering contracts awarded to him by the Kremlin, is known as an active supporter of Putin’s political goals, and he is wanted by the F.B.I. for allegedly interfering in U.S. elections. For years, though, he has denied links to Wagner, despite mounting evidence that he is profiting from the deployment of mercenaries to the Middle East and Africa to surreptitiously promote Moscow’s agenda.</p> <p>But in the video, he starts his pitch by saying openly that he represents Wagner and is looking for recruits as the war in Ukraine “is tough and doesn’t even compare to the Chechen wars or any others.”</p> <p>Prigozhin’s catering company, Concord, coyly said in a Thursday statement that it “can confirm that the person in the video bears an enormous resemblance to Yevgeny Viktorovich [Prigozhin].”</p>

“Judging by his rhetoric, he somehow deals with implementing the tasks of the special operation, and does so successfully ... in addition, the person speaking in the video has a great delivery, just like Evgeny Viktorovich [Prigozhin] does,” the company said in its statement.

Another equivocate statement posted by Concord’s press service came from Prigozhin himself: “If I were a prisoner, I would dream of joining this friendly team in order to not only redeem my debt to the Motherland, but also to repay it with interest.”

“Those who do not want mercenaries or prisoners to fight ... who do not like this topic, send your children to the front,” Prigozhin said. “It’s either them or your children, decide for yourself.”

Wagner has been leading a double effort to recruit men all over Russia in what the experts called “a shadow mobilization” as Putin has rebuffed calls for national mobilization from several hawkish Russian officials. Such a draft would almost certainly cause an uproar from the public that has been told for months that Moscow is running only a limited “special military operation” in Ukraine.

In addition to online ads and banners in dozens of cities inviting ordinary Russians to sign up, Wagner recruiters have been touring prisons seeking men between the ages of 22 and 50, but its recruiters say an exception is possible for older men if they are in a “good physical form.”

In the video, Prigozhin says the first batch of convicts fought in Ukraine on June 1 as Wagner was helping Russia take the Vuhlehirska power station in the Donetsk region. The mercenaries’ success in capturing the site was paraded on Russian state TV in the first public embrace of “the orchestra,” as the private army is often called, in reference to its namesake, right-wing German classical composer Richard Wagner.

“There were 40 people from St. Petersburg, [from a] high-security facility, recidivists,” Prigozhin said. “They entered the enemy trenches, cut them up with knives; there were three dead and seven wounded. Out of the three dead, one was 52 years old and had already served a 30-year-long sentence. He died a hero.”

Gulagu Net, a Russian human rights organization that helps convicts, first received calls and letters from inmates about Wagner’s recruitment efforts back in March. The head of Gulagu Net, Vladimir Osechkin, told The Washington Post in an interview last month that the effort was very limited at the time.

“Those were colonies for former law enforcement officers. ... They were looking for those with combat experience, who took part in counterterrorism operations and various hostilities,” Osechkin said.

“We are talking special forces here, people who know what a weapon is,” he added. “They were told they would be commanders, that the motherland needs them, but as far as we understand, this campaign failed as they haven’t been able to recruit many of them.”

But as Russia’s campaign in Ukraine stalled since the initial gains in the spring, the effort to find fresh reinforcements took on new urgency.

“Starting in July, the number of calls we received grew exponentially, saying that Wagner has launched a mass recruitment campaign in regular colonies,” Osechkin said.

The enlistment approach was two-pronged: Some convicts were offered support roles, such as digging trenches and doing various construction work near separatist-controlled areas in the eastern Donbas region. Others were recruited for units of 12 people tasked with “special combat missions,” even though they often had little military training.

“It all points to the fact that the Russian army has a personnel shortage, and they are trying to replenish it using prisoners whom they don’t care about,” Osechkin said.

	<p>Another civil rights organization, Russia Behind Bars, which has long investigated horrific conditions in Russian prisons, estimated that approximately 7,000 to 10,000 convicts have already been sent to fight in Ukraine.</p> <p>Both organizations have voiced concern that prisoners are being tricked into joining a potential suicide mission with no legal guarantees, as well as concern about releasing potentially violent convicted criminals serving decades-long sentences for murder or aggravated assault.</p> <p>“In addition to it being immoral and very dangerous, it also means that the concept of ‘crime’ no longer exists in Russia; they wiped their feet on the judicial system,” the head of Russia Behind Bars, Olga Romanova, wrote in a Facebook post.</p> <p>According to Gulagu Net, Putin awarded at least one Russian convict who fought in Ukraine with a medal of bravery: Ivan Neparatov, a member of an organized crime group who served 12 years out of his 25-year sentence for murder, robbery and kidnapping.</p> <p>On the video, Prigozhin told the inmates of the penal colony, which The Post identified to be in the small Mari El republic in central Russia, that he was looking for the most brazen “stormtroopers,” willing to be thrown into hot spots as infantry.</p> <p>“You have five minutes to make a decision,” he said. “Regarding trust and guarantees, do you have anyone who can get you out of prison alive? Allah and God can get you out [dead]. I am taking you out of here alive. But it’s not always that I bring you back alive.”</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 Japan reopening; closure effects will linger</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/16/japan-covid-restrictions-tourist-xenophobia/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/16/japan-covid-restrictions-tourist-xenophobia/</a>
GIST	<p>TOKYO — Japan is inching closer to a full reopening, with an announcement likely in the coming days. But the country’s prolonged closure during the coronavirus pandemic has done lasting damage to its reputation as a destination for international investors, academics and tourists, experts say.</p> <p>Japan strictly limits foreign arrivals out of covid-19 concerns, a scientifically specious approach that has made the country an outlier among top economies and most Asia-Pacific neighbors that have <a href="#">reopened to tourists</a>.</p> <p>Xenophobia has <a href="#">festered</a> as policymakers and news coverage have tied foreigners to the spread of the virus. Investors, academics and international students have diverted their plans elsewhere. Even after Japan began accepting group tours recently, the intense monitoring and bureaucratic hurdles have largely kept tourists’ interest at bay.</p> <p>Now, Japan faces a credibility gap as it looks to rejoin the world. Figures in business, academia, policymaking and diplomacy are concerned the closure has punctured Japan’s image as a culture that values hospitality. Even with a full reopening, Japan would need concrete steps to restore its standing, these people said.</p> <p>“In 2022, the extremes between the G-7 countries and even its own neighbors ... have really exacerbated this perception gap,” said Joshua W. Walker, president and chief executive of the New York-based Japan Society, which works to promote U.S.-Japan relations. “There are so many other countries that have figured this out, whether it’s Britain, Singapore, even Taiwan or Korea, that have been more or less operating in a more normal fashion ... and Japan is just now taking baby steps.”</p> <p>Walker is among a chorus of professionals who have become frustrated by the country’s apparent lack of interest in the perception problems caused by its isolation. They worry that without a robust effort to market Japan as open to foreigners, there will be lackluster interest from abroad and continued concern about the domestic impact.</p>

Public opinion polls over the past year have shown broad support for border closures, which analysts say made it politically difficult for Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to fully reopen before July [elections](#). A Nikkei poll conducted in late June found 49 percent in support of lifting the daily cap on visitors and 44 percent opposed.

“I really do believe that Japan can recover from this if it puts its mind to it. But I’m not convinced that it is fully there yet,” Walker said.

The concerns come as Japan grapples with a sluggish recovery from the pandemic and a depreciating yen, which hit a 24-year low against the dollar recently. Business leaders have argued that fully resuming inbound travel would invigorate the economy and that many tourists would be eager to take advantage of the weak currency.

But the country’s approach has fueled a perception of Japan as a place that is “too cumbersome and takes too much effort” to visit, the Japan Association of Corporate Executives said this week.

“Japan has disappointed many people who love Japan and have a potential to like Japan,” said Takakazu Yamagishi, professor of political science and health policy at Nanzan University in Nagoya. “The border closure not only made many tourists who had plans to visit Japan upset, but it also will make them more cautious of Japan at least for the next few years.”

After enacting some of the most stringent pandemic restrictions, Japan began gradually reopening to some foreigners this spring, with complex requirements. Foreign tourists can book trips only through an approved tour company and must have medical travel insurance that covers covid-19. [Until last week](#), tourists needed to be chaperoned by a guide. Visitors must wear masks unless they are six feet away from another person and not talking.

In June, when group tours resumed, only 252 tourists entered, according to the Japan National Tourism Organization. In July, the number rose to about 7,900.

But that is far from pre-pandemic levels: In 2019, Japan welcomed a record 32 million foreign tourists and had aimed to reach 40 million in 2020. Before covid, 80 percent of international visitors were individuals who were not part of group tours, [according to](#) the Japan Business Federation.

Tokyo is now considering a full reopening that could take place as early as October, [according to Nikkei Asia](#). The prime minister’s office said in a statement that the country will ease borders to be on par with Group of Seven standards, “taking into account the infection situation and needs at home and abroad, as well as the border control measures of other countries.”

The closure has created cascading effects on academia that will last years, said Tomoyuki Sasaki, an associate professor of Japanese studies at William & Mary in Virginia, who conducted a survey of hundreds of academics and students of Japan studies in the United States, Europe and Asia.

Students dropped out of Japan studies programs and researchers lost funding because they could not fulfill grant requirements to conduct research in the country, threatening the closure of Japan studies departments in some schools, the survey results show. One professor at a top-tier university responded in the survey that they are now recommending students not to study Japan as their sole focus as a result of the travel barriers.

The number of international students studying in Japan fell by roughly one-quarter between 2019 and 2021, according to Japan’s Education Ministry.

“It took a long time for predecessors to build this field. But now, it’s really falling apart because of this Japanese government’s very strict border restrictions,” Sasaki said.

	<p>Business leaders <a href="#">are pushing</a> for a full reopening, <a href="#">warning of</a> the loss of potential investment.</p> <p>“Japan really has a golden opportunity to expand foreign investment into the country, something the government has had as an objective for most of the last 20 years,” said Chris LaFleur, chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan. “The yen’s relative weakness at the moment, in principle, presents an incredible opportunity for those who might be interested in investing in Japan to consider it seriously.”</p> <p>But domestic challenges stand in the way. Yamagishi said the government’s justifications for its border policies fueled public anxiety, stoking fears without providing facts — such as the low percentage of people testing positive at airports.</p> <p>From restaurateurs to <a href="#">museum operators</a>, many people fear foreigners would flout Japanese social expectations of mask-wearing and social distancing, leading to an increase in coronavirus cases.</p> <p>“In foreign news, I often see images of foreigners not wearing masks,” one resident of Minato City in Tokyo remarked recently on the ward’s online public comments section.</p> <p>“I would like you to think about how to deal with foreign tourists by calling attention to them in English, Chinese, Korean, and other languages,” the person wrote. “I would also like you to protect the safety of the lives of Minato City residents.”</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Pope: arming Ukraine ‘morally acceptable’</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/world/europe/pope-francis-ukraine.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/world/europe/pope-francis-ukraine.html</a>
GIST	<p>ROME — After Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Pope Francis initially appeared to uphold the Vatican’s longstanding policy of not taking sides, before eventually changing tack and <a href="#">saying explicitly that Russia was the aggressor</a> in the war.</p> <p>Now, Francis has weighed in on a morally thorny issue, saying on Thursday that it is acceptable for countries to provide weapons to Ukraine so that the country can defend itself.</p> <p>Self-defense in the face of aggression is “not only lawful but also an expression of love of country,” Francis said.</p> <p>But he also stressed that communication channels with Russia should remain open even if, he said, dialogue with the aggressor “stinks,” because “otherwise we close off the only reasonable door to peace.”</p> <p>Francis spoke to reporters onboard a plane returning from a three-day trip to Kazakhstan, where he participated in an interfaith conference attended by faith leaders from 60 countries. The meeting promoted interfaith dialogue as a means to help heal the world’s ills, including war.</p> <p>Asked whether it was right for countries to supply weapons to Ukraine, Francis said that was “a political decision, which can be moral — morally acceptable — if it is done according to the conditions of morality.” It would be immoral, he said, “if it is done with the intention of provoking more war or selling weapons or discarding those weapons that are no longer needed.”</p> <p>The pope made a reference to “just war,” a set of ethical principles regarding the proportional response to aggression, usually traced to the writings of St. Augustine.</p> <p>The interfaith conference was supposed to <a href="#">provide an opportunity for Francis</a> to meet with Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, who has justified the war in Ukraine. But Kirill decided last month not to attend and the Russian delegation was headed instead by Metropolitan Anthony, who is in charge of the church’s foreign relations.</p>



	<p>The two religious leaders did speak by video in March, but Kirill spent a good part of that meeting reading prepared remarks that echoed the arguments of Russia’s president, Vladimir V. Putin. Francis <a href="#">told an Italian newspaper</a> he had told Kirill that the men were not “clerics of the state” and said the patriarch could not be “Putin’s altar boy.”</p> <p>In August, Ukrainian officials were dismayed when Francis referred to <a href="#">Daria Dugina</a>, a 29-year-old Russian ultranationalist who spoke out in favor of the invasion of Ukraine, and was killed by a car bomb, as <a href="#">an “innocent” victim</a>.</p> <p>Afterward, Ukraine’s foreign minister summoned the Vatican’s ambassador to Ukraine to express “<a href="#">profound disappointment</a>” in Francis’s words. It was after that meeting that the Pope explicitly blamed Russia in the conflict.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/14 NYC pandemic job losses linger</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/14/nyregion/nyc-covid-job-losses.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/14/nyregion/nyc-covid-job-losses.html</a>
GIST	<p>The darkest days of the pandemic are far behind New York City. Masks are coming off, Times Square is packed with tourists and Midtown Manhattan lunch spots have growing lines of workers in business suits. Walking around the city, it often feels like 2019 again.</p> <p>But the bustling surface obscures a lingering wound from the pandemic. While the country as a whole has recently regained all of the jobs it lost early in the health crisis, New York City is still missing 176,000, representing the slowest recovery of any major metropolitan area, according to the latest employment data.</p> <p>New York relies more than other cities on international tourists, business travelers and commuters, whose halting return has weighed on the workers who cater to them — from bartenders and baggage handlers, to office cleaners and theater ushers. A majority of the lost private sector jobs have been concentrated in the hospitality and retail industries, traditional pipelines into the work force for younger adults, immigrants and residents without a college degree.</p> <p>By contrast, overall employment in industries that allow for remote work, such as the technology sector, is back at prepandemic levels.</p> <p>The lopsided recovery threatens to deepen inequality in a city where apartment rents are soaring, while the number of residents receiving temporary government assistance has jumped by almost a third since February 2020. As New York emerges from the pandemic, city leaders face the risk of an economic rebound that leaves thousands of blue-collar workers behind.</p> <p>“The real damage here is that many of the industries with the most accessible jobs are the ones that are still struggling to fully recover,” said Jonathan Bowles, the executive director of the Center for an Urban Future, a public policy think tank.</p> <p>New York City was hit particularly hard by the first wave of the virus, prompting business closures and employer vaccine mandates that were among the longest and strictest in the country. Part of the reason for New York’s lagging recovery is that it lost one million jobs in the first two months of the pandemic, the most of any city.</p> <p>More recently, New York City has regained jobs at a rapid clip. The technology sector actually added jobs in the first 18 months of the pandemic, a period when almost every other industry shrank.</p> <p>But job growth slowed this summer in sectors like hotels and restaurants compared with a year ago, while businesses in technology, health care and finance increased employment at a faster pace over the same period, according to an analysis by James Parrott, an economist at the Center for New York City Affairs at the New School.</p>



In July, the city's unemployment rate was 6.1 percent, compared with 3.5 percent in the country overall that month.

At the height of the pandemic, Ronald Nibbs, 47, was laid off as a cleaner at an office building in Midtown Manhattan, where he had worked for seven years. Mr. Nibbs, his girlfriend and his two children struggled on unemployment benefits and food stamps.

He secured temporary positions, but the work was spotty with few people back in offices. He did not want to switch careers, hoping to win his old position back. He began to drink heavily to deal with the anxiety of unemployment.

In May, his building finally called him back to work. "When I got that phone call, I wanted to cry," Mr. Nibbs said.

There are 1,250 fewer office cleaners in the city now than there were before the pandemic, according to Local 32BJ of the Service Employees International Union.

Last month, New York officials cut their jobs growth forecast for 2022 to 4.3 percent, from 4.9 percent, saying the state was not expected to reach prepandemic levels of employment until 2026. Officials cited the persistence of remote work and the migration of city residents away from the state as a long-term risk to employment levels.

The number of tourists visiting New York City this year is expected to rebound to 85 percent of the level in 2019, a year in which a record 66.6 million travelers arrived, according to forecasts from NYC & Company, the city's official tourism agency.

However, according to the agency, visitors to the city are spending less money overall because those who have historically stayed longer — business and international travelers — have not returned at the same rates. This has hurt department stores that depend on high-spending foreign visitors, as well as hotels that rely on business travelers to book conferences and banquets.

Ilialy Santos, 47, returned to her job as a room attendant this month at the Paramount Hotel in Times Square, which is reopening for the first time since March 2020. The hotel had been a candidate to be converted into affordable housing, but the plan was opposed by a local union, the New York Hotel and Gaming Trades Council, in order to save jobs.

Ms. Santos said she could not find any employment for two years, falling behind every month on her bills. The hotel union provided a \$1,000 payment to her landlord to help cover her rent.

"I'm excited to be going back to work, getting back to my normal life and becoming more stable," Ms. Santos said.

Despite the city's elevated unemployment rate, many employers say they are still struggling to find workers, especially in roles that cannot be done remotely. The size of the work force has also dropped, declining by about 300,000 people since February 2020.

Some blue-collar employees who lost their jobs early in the pandemic are now holding out for positions that would allow them to work from home.

Jade Campbell, 34, has been out of work since March 2020, when the pandemic temporarily shuttered the Old Navy store where she had worked as a sales associate. When the store called her back in the fall, she was in the middle of a difficult pregnancy, with a first-grade son who was struggling to focus during online classes. She decided to stay home, applying for different types of government assistance.

Ms. Campbell now lives on her own in Queens without child care support; her children are 1 and 8 years old. She has refused to get vaccinated against Covid-19, a prerequisite in New York City for many in-

person jobs. Still, she said she felt optimistic about applying for remote customer service roles after she reached out to Goodwill NYNJ, a nonprofit, for help with her résumé.

“I got two kids I know I have to support,” she said. “I can’t really depend on the government to help me out.”

At Petri Plumbing & Heating in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, several workers quit over the city’s policy that employees of private businesses be fully vaccinated. The restriction was the most stringent in the country when it was announced in December 2021 at the end of Mayor Bill de Blasio’s term.

After Mayor Eric Adams signaled earlier this year that his administration would not enforce the mandate, Michael Petri, the company’s owner, offered to rehire three former workers. One returned, another had found another job and the third had moved to another state, he said.

Thanks to a \$50 hourly wage and monthly bonuses, current job openings at Petri Plumbing have attracted a flood of applicants. In a shift from before the pandemic, Mr. Petri said he now has to wade through more applicants with no plumbing experience.

The strongest candidates often have too many driving infractions to be put on the company’s insurance policy, he said. But recently, Mr. Petri was so desperate to hire a mechanic with too many infractions that he recruited a young worker just to drive him.

“This is without a doubt one of the more difficult times we have faced,” said Mr. Petri, whose family started the company in 1906.

The disruptions have set the city’s youngest workers back the most. The unemployment rate for workers ages 16 to 24 is 20.7 percent.

After graduating from high school in 2020, Simone Ward enrolled in community college but dropped out after a few months, feeling disengaged from online classes.

Ms. Ward, 20, signed up for a cooking program with Queens Community House, a nonprofit organization, which allowed her to get a part-time job preparing steak sandwiches at Citi Field during baseball games. But the scheduling was inconsistent, and the job required a 90-minute commute on three subway lines from her home in Brooklyn’s Canarsie neighborhood.

She applied for data entry jobs that would allow her to work remotely, but never heard back. She remembered interviewing for a job at an Olive Garden restaurant and recognizing in the moment that she was flailing, her social skills diminished by the isolation of lockdown.

“The pandemic feels like it set my life back five steps,” she said.

For Desiree Obando, 35, losing her job at a restaurant in Manhattan’s West Village early in the pandemic nudged her to leave the hospitality industry after 12 years. When the restaurant group she used to work for asked her to come back a few months later, she had already enrolled at LaGuardia Community College, returning to school after dropping out twice before, with the goal of becoming a high school counselor.

She is now working a part-time job at an education nonprofit that pays \$20 an hour, less than her hospitality job. But the work is close to her home in East Harlem, giving her the flexibility to pick up her daughter whenever the school has virus exposures.

Ms. Obando is hopeful that she will eventually get an income boost after she completes her master’s degree.

“There’s nothing like the pandemic to put things in perspective,” Ms. Obando said. “I made the right choice for me and my family.

HEADLINE	09/15 Calif. as epicenter for guaranteed income
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/us/california-cities-guaranteed-income.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/us/california-cities-guaranteed-income.html</a>
GIST	<p>Shortly after Michael Tubbs was elected in 2016, becoming the youngest person to ever serve as mayor of Stockton, he proposed an unconventional plan: giving unrestricted cash payments to the city’s most vulnerable residents.</p> <p>Tubbs, now 32, learned about the concept of guaranteed income during his undergraduate studies at Stanford University. Once elected, he knew he wanted to apply it in the Central Valley city where he grew up.</p> <p>During his first term, Stockton <a href="#">began the country’s first mayor-led guaranteed income program</a>, offering \$500-a-month payments to 125 residents for two years.</p> <p>“When I first started working on this nearly five years ago, people called me crazy,” Tubbs told me recently. “Now unrestricted cash is seen as an impactful solution to income inequality.”</p> <p>Since 2020, more than 48 guaranteed income programs have been started in cities nationwide, according to Mayors for a Guaranteed Income, a network of leaders supporting such efforts at the local, state and federal levels.</p> <p>The idea behind such programs is that providing unrestricted cash payments is the best way to close the wealth gap and give people the opportunity to build more stable lives, including offering them a buffer time of sorts to focus on finding higher paying, full-time employment. Opponents have argued that the programs encourage people not to work.</p> <p>I recently wrote about <a href="#">how these programs are blanketing the nation</a>, with California as the epicenter of the movement.</p> <p>Last year, the state set aside \$35 million to help fund local guaranteed income programs — the first statewide funding of its kind.</p> <p>In Los Angeles, a pilot program funded primarily by the city has already begun giving \$1,000 a month to 3,200 low-income families. The pilot is slated to run for a year.</p> <p>Oakland and San Diego have also recently moved ahead with programs, which are funded primarily with private money. Oakland’s will give 600 low-income families \$500 for 18 months; San Diego’s will provide \$500 a month for two years to several families with young children.</p> <p>But questions remain about whether these programs can be expanded effectively.</p> <p>An analysis from the Jain Family Institute, a nonprofit group that has studied several pilot programs, argues that the best path toward a national guaranteed income isn’t through scaling up pilots, but in reforming and expanding existing federal programs, such as the earned-income tax credit and the child tax credit.</p> <p>“It does not make sense to take a municipal program and build it when there are already programs in place that can be reformed,” Stephen Nuñez, lead researcher on guaranteed income at the Jain Family Institute, told me.</p> <p>Even so, the programs are pushing ahead at the local level.</p> <p>Tubbs, who lost his re-election bid in 2020 and is now an adviser to Gov. Gavin Newsom, a proponent of guaranteed income, says the approach is a critical tool in achieving racial and economic justice for Black people and Latinos.</p>

	“The ways in which racism and capitalism have intersected to steal wealth from some communities,” he said, “creates the disparities we see today.”
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Firefighters gain against Calif. biggest blaze</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/sep/15/mosquito-fire-california-latest-news">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/sep/15/mosquito-fire-california-latest-news</a>
GIST	<p>Firefighters prevented flames from entering a northern <a href="#">California</a> mountain town and reported major progress on Thursday against the week-old blaze that’s become the largest in the state so far this year.</p> <p>Conditions at the <a href="#">Mosquito fire</a> about 110 miles (177km) north-east of San Francisco were “looking a whole heck of a lot better”, according to a fire spokesman, Scott McLean.</p> <p>Crews on the ground built up containment lines while water-dropping helicopters knocked down hotspots after the fire roared back to life on Tuesday, burning an unknown number of structures near Foresthill.</p> <p>“It’s looking really good on the west end where we had that dramatic increase of fire earlier this week,” McLean said on Thursday. Flames raced up a drainage ditch into a neighborhood, but firefighters saved all the homes.</p> <p>Scientists say the climate crisis has made the west warmer and drier over the last three decades and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive. In the last five years, California has experienced the largest and most destructive fires in its history.</p> <p>Evacuation orders remained for some 11,000 residents because of the unpredictable nature of the winds, McLean said, which typically blow in the direction of several canyons and could rapidly spread flames if gusts pick up.</p> <p>The Mosquito fire was 20% contained after destroying at least 64 homes and other buildings. The 100-square-mile (258-sq-km) blaze on Wednesday surpassed the size of the previous largest conflagration in 2022 – the McKinney fire – although this season has seen a fraction of last year’s wildfire activity so far.</p> <p>In southern California, dogs aided the hunt for a person missing in a heavily damaged area of the San Bernardino Mountains where thunderstorms unleashed rocks, trees and earth that washed away cars, buried homes and affected 3,000 residents in two remote communities. Nearly 2in (5cm) of rain fell on Monday at Yucaipa Ridge between Oak Glen, home to apple orchards that are a fall tourist destination, and Forest Falls, once a summer getaway for cabin owners that has become a bedroom community.</p> <p>“This entire area is blanketed with up to 6ft of mud, debris, large boulders,” said Jim Topelski, a San Bernardino county fire chief.</p> <p>The mudslide damage in Oak Glen and Forest Falls served as a powerful warning to residents of the lingering damage wildfires can cause months or even years after flames are extinguished and the smoke clears.</p> <p>An intense amount of rain even over a short period of time can have catastrophic effects on hillsides where fire has stripped vegetation that once held the ground intact.</p> <p>The Mosquito fire was one of three large fires in the state.</p> <p>The Fairview fire was burning about 75 miles (121km) south-east of Los Angeles. The 44-square-mile (114-sq-km) blaze was 75% contained by Wednesday night. Two people died fleeing the fire, which destroyed at least 35 homes and other structures in Riverside county.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	09/16 Day 205 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/16/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-205-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/16/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-205-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ukrainian authorities have found a mass burial site of more than 440 bodies in the eastern city of Izium</b> that was recaptured from Russian forces, a regional police chief has said. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy likened the discovery to what happened in Bucha outside Kyiv early in the war, Reuters reported. “Russia is leaving death behind it everywhere and must be held responsible,” he said.</li> <li>• <b>The European Union chief, Ursula von der Leyen, said she wanted the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, to face the international criminal court</b> over war crimes in <a href="#">Ukraine</a>. “That Putin must lose this war and must face up to his actions, that is important to me,” she told the TV channel of German news outlet Bild on Thursday.</li> <li>• <b>Ukraine has lost nearly 15% of its grain storage capacity in the war, threatening its role as a key food supplier to the world</b>, a report said. The US government-backed Conflict Observatory said Russians had seized 6.24m tonnes of food storage capacity, and another 2.25m tonnes of capacity in Ukrainian hands had been destroyed, Agence France-Presse reported. As a result, farmers were running out of room to store their output for shipment, which could discourage plantings for the next crop, especially winter wheat, the report said.</li> <li>• <b>Pope Francis said it was morally legitimate for countries to provide weapons to <a href="#">Ukraine</a></b> to help it defend itself from Russian aggression. “This is a political decision which it can be moral, morally acceptable, if it is done under conditions of morality ... Self-defence is not only licit but also an expression of love for the homeland,” he said. “Someone who does not defend oneself, who does not defend something, does not love it. Those who defend [something] love it.”</li> <li>• <b>Vladimir Putin thanked the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, for his “balanced” approach to the <a href="#">Ukraine</a> crisis and blasted Washington’s “ugly” policies</b>, at a meeting that followed a major setback for Moscow on the battlefield. Putin told his Chinese counterpart on Thursday: “We understand your questions and your concerns in this regard, and we certainly will offer a detailed explanation of our stand on this issue during today’s meeting, even though we already talked about it earlier.”</li> <li>• <b>Germany will supply Ukraine with additional armoured vehicles and rocket launch systems but will not provide the battle tanks that Kyiv has long asked for</b>, says the German defence minister, Christine Lambrecht. She said on Thursday that Soviet-made BMP-1 infantry fighting vehicles would also “very quickly” head to Ukraine from Greece.</li> <li>• <b>The UN nuclear watchdog’s 35-nation board of governors passed a resolution demanding Russia end its occupation of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant</b> in southern Ukraine, Reuters reports. Thursday’s resolution is the second on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine passed by the International Atomic Energy Agency’s board.</li> <li>• <b>The US president, Joe Biden, announced a new \$600m arms package for Ukraine</b>, according to a White House memo sent to the state department on Thursday. Reuters reports the memo does not detail how the money will be used, but sources said it was expected to include munitions and more Himars rocket systems.</li> <li>• <b>The US has imposed new sanctions on 22 Russian individuals and two Russian entities</b>. The people include Maria Alexeyevna Lvova-Belova, Russia’s presidential commissioner for children’s rights, who has led Russia’s efforts to deport thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia and forced the adoption of Ukrainian children into Russian families. The entities include Task Force Rusich, a neo-Nazi paramilitary group that has participated in combat alongside Russia’s military in Ukraine.</li> <li>• <b>A Ukrainian volunteer medic captured by Russian forces during their deadly siege of Mariupol delivered devastating testimony</b> before US lawmakers on Thursday, recounting her experiences of torture, death and terror. Yuliia Paievskaya, who was detained in the port city in March and held by Russian and pro-Russia forces for three months, spoke before the Helsinki commission, a government agency created in part to promote compliance with human rights internationally.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	09/16 Ukraine mass burial grave found
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/16/ukraine-mass-grave-with-440-bodies-discovered-in-recaptured-izium-says-police-chief">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/16/ukraine-mass-grave-with-440-bodies-discovered-in-recaptured-izium-says-police-chief</a>
GIST	<p>Volodymyr Zelenskyy has accused Russia of “leaving death everywhere” after Ukrainian authorities said they had found a mass grave in a forest in the north-eastern city of Izium containing more than 440 bodies.</p> <p>Ukraine’s president likened the find, in an area recaptured this week from Russian forces, to the previous mass killings of civilians in the cities of Bucha, outside Kyiv, and Mariupol.</p> <p>Speaking in a video address on Thursday night, Zelenskyy called on the world to “hold Russia to real account for this war”.</p> <p>“Russia leaves death everywhere and it must be held responsible for that,” he declared. “The necessary procedures have already begun [in Izium]”.</p> <p>More “clear, verifiable information” should be available later on Friday, he said, inviting the international media to visit the scene.</p> <p>Video from Izium <a href="#">showed a sandy pine forest dotted with graves</a>. Wooden crosses marked the locations. One hand-written sign read: “Ukraine armed forces, 17 people, Izium city, [taken] from morgue.” A few listed numbers – 345, 347, 444. Others had no inscriptions at all.</p> <p>Serhiy Bolvinov, the chief police investigator for Kharkiv region, told Sky News some of the people had died as a result of shelling and airstrikes. He said forensic investigations would be carried out on every grave. A process of mass exhumations would begin shortly.</p> <p>“I can say it is one of the largest burial sites in a big town in liberated [areas] ... 440 bodies were buried in one place,” he said.</p> <p>Oleh Kotenko, Ukraine’s missing persons ombudsman who visited the forest on Thursday, said some graves contained names and dates. Corpses of Ukrainian soldiers were taken in a van from the local morgue and tossed into a mass grave in black sacks, he said.</p> <p>Citing video posted by Russian soldiers on social media, he said there were probably more than 17 bodies in one location. “We haven’t counted them yet, but I think there are more than 25 or even 30,” he said. Investigators with metal detectors were scanning the site for hidden explosives.</p> <p>Izium resident Sergei Gorodko said that among the hundreds buried in individual graves were dozens of adults and children killed in a Russian airstrike on an apartment building. He said he pulled some of them out of the rubble “with my own hands”.</p> <p>Thousands of Russian troops fled Izium at the weekend, following a stunning Ukrainian counter-offensive. The Russians abandoned almost all of Kharkiv province and retreated to new defensive positions east of the Oskil River, about 10 miles from Izium. There was no immediate public comment from Moscow.</p> <p>The Ukrainian defence ministry tweeted: “Mass graves are being discovered in Izium after liberation from the (Russians),” and it added: “the current largest burial (site) has 440 unmarked graves”.</p> <p>The exact circumstances of how residents died have yet to be determined. In February and March, Russian troops killed more than 1,400 people in the Kyiv region, including in the suburb of Bucha, during their failed attempt to seize the Ukrainian capital.</p> <p>They rounded up, interrogated and executed hundreds of civilians. Most of the victims were men. They also included the female heads of villages, who were shot and buried with their families, and parents and children gunned down as they tried to drive to safety.</p>

	<p>Dozens of bombed-out apartment buildings in Izium's city centre lie derelict along roads covered with the debris of what has been <a href="#">one of this war's most fierce battles</a>, resulting in the deaths of at least 1,000 people, according to Ukrainian officials.</p> <p>On Wednesday, the city – described as a second Mariupol because of the heavy bombardments it has suffered – was visited by the outside world for the first time after its recapture.</p> <p>The Russian army killed more than 20,000 people in Mariupol, a south-eastern city on the Sea of Azov, according to Kyiv. Russian troops encircled the port in early March and systematically bombed it until mid-May, attacking from land, sea and air.</p> <p>Survivors buried loved ones in makeshift graves next to their apartment blocks and in children's playgrounds. Others were left entombed in the basements and cellars of high-rise apartment blocks pulverised by Russian strikes. Bodies remained there for weeks.</p> <p>Russia has repeatedly denied it targets civilians or has committed war crimes.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Index wildfire evacuations downgraded</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/wildfire/bolt-creek-fire-index-skykomish-goldbar-us2/281-18cebd30-ee1b-4584-99e1-47283341ca85">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/wildfire/bolt-creek-fire-index-skykomish-goldbar-us2/281-18cebd30-ee1b-4584-99e1-47283341ca85</a>
GIST	<p>MONROE, Wash. — Wildfire evacuations were downgraded for Index on Thursday, and a portion of U.S. 2 near where the <a href="#">Bolt Creek Fire</a> is burning between Skykomish and Index will remain closed through the weekend.</p> <p>The fire was first reported at 5:15 a.m. on Sept. 10 and quickly spread. The fire has burned an estimated 9,440 acres and is 5% contained as of Thursday morning.</p> <p>A <a href="#">13-mile stretch of U.S. 2</a> from Index-Galena Road to Beckler Road (milepost 36 to 49) will remain closed until at least Monday, according to the Washington State Department of Transportation. Officials previously said the highway remains unsafe for travel due to falling rocks and fire debris.</p> <p>Evacuation orders for Index were downgraded Thursday to Level 2 from Level 1, according to the Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management. Index was previously under a Level 3 evacuation, but that order was lessened Tuesday.</p> <p>Level 2 evacuations mean residents should be prepared to leave at any moment. Level 1 evacuations mean residents should start preparing to evacuate.</p> <p>Baring, Grotto, Forest Service Road 65 (Beckler River Road) and the area along U.S. 2 to milepost 48 east of the Money Creek tunnel are under Level 3 evacuation orders <a href="#">as of Thursday morning</a>. <a href="#">Level 3 evacuation</a> orders mean <a href="#">residents should leave now</a>.</p> <p>Evacuation orders for those living between Index and Zeke's Drive In were reduced from Level 2 to Level 1 Tuesday. There are no longer evacuation orders for residents in Gold Bar.</p> <p>About 400 firefighters have conducted controlled burns and cut buffer zones around homes. The fire itself appears to be contained to a perimeter and its spread is slowing.</p> <p>Around 680 residences and over 1,000 minor structures were threatened by the fire, according to the <a href="#">Northwest Interagency Coordination Center</a>. No injuries have been reported.</p> <p>The cause of the fire still has not been determined.</p>



	<p>Fire officials said the weather is working in their favor and they hope for rainy conditions in the not-to-distant future that will end the wildfire season.</p> <p>Previously, smoky conditions were hindering the firefighting effort. For two days, crews hadn't been able to put water on the flames or get a good sense of how many acres were burning because of winds and smoke.</p> <p>To help prevent additional fires, the outdoor burn ban issued on July 23 was upgraded on Sept. 13 to include recreational fires. That includes the cities and towns of Lake Stevens, Mill Creek, Monroe and Sultan.</p> <p>The Federal Emergency Management Agency authorized the use of federal funds to help with firefighting costs Sunday.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Seattle Humane is 125yrs-old</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/bellevue/seattle-humane-celebrating-125-anniversary/281-af45f128-5f69-4d41-933c-f5940fb323e5">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/bellevue/seattle-humane-celebrating-125-anniversary/281-af45f128-5f69-4d41-933c-f5940fb323e5</a>
GIST	<p>BELLEVUE, Wash. — Seattle was a very different place in 1897. The <a href="#">Klondike Gold</a> Rush reached Seattle and the area was booming.</p> <p>Believe it or not, that's the same time <a href="#">Seattle Humane</a> was founded. This week, the nonprofit is <a href="#">celebrating 125 years</a> of saving lives and completing families.</p> <p>“One hundred and twenty-five years is worthy of week long party!” exclaimed Brandon Macz with Seattle Humane.</p> <p>Seattle Humane has grown like a litter of puppies and honors their humble beginnings. The organization started by advocating for animals in stockyards and slaughterhouses and was the sole animal control agency for King County until the 1970s.</p> <p>A massive renovation project took nearly two years to complete and opened in 2017 with a state-of-the-art animal shelter and veterinary facility with support and resources for thousands of pet owners.</p> <p>Seattle Humane officially turned 125 on September 15. The annual day of giving is scheduled for Sept. 16. “We love adopting out animals, but those fees don’t pay the bills for this amazing facility so we really do count on our donors to continue,” said Macz.</p> <p>The goal is \$175,000, with 90% of revenue coming from donations.</p> <p>“We’ve really seen an increase in the need for our services like the Pet Food bank,” said Macz.</p> <p>The Pet Food Bank has supplies like bowls and beds as well and is always in need of items like cat litter.</p> <p>Seattle Humane is hosting it’s public birthday party on Sept. 17 and the “rescue squad” invites the public to help them continue the lifesaving work with donations during their open house on Saturday from 10-12 p.m. and offers family fun like the “kitten cuddle booth.” Anyone who brings a pet food donation will be entered to win a \$500 gift card.</p> <p>Seattle Humane asks that visitors leave their pets at home so they can celebrate their furry guests. Yes, there will be cake for people and pets!</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Downtown Seattle slow recovery</b>
----------	---

SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/downtown-seattle-businesses-fighting-stay-afloat-post-pandemic/QLL6NFFREVG6DKWAN7MUDXBD2U/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/downtown-seattle-businesses-fighting-stay-afloat-post-pandemic/QLL6NFFREVG6DKWAN7MUDXBD2U/</a>
GIST	<p>In downtown Seattle, the impacts of the pandemic continue to weigh heavily on businesses. A recent study by University of California, Berkeley, looks at downtown recovery in major cities across the country and parts of Canada. Of the 62 major cities, Seattle has been one of the slowest to recover, ranking 40.</p> <p>“The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on our downtown and downtowns across the country and across the world,” says John Scholes with the Downtown Seattle Association. “We’re still having businesses that are waiting for customers to come back.”</p> <p>The study took into account office vacancy rates, public transportation ridership and retail spending.</p> <p>Business owner Paul Pugliese says he doesn’t need a study; he sees the pandemic impact firsthand. His Millheads Barbershop is sandwiched between two vacant buildings.</p> <p>“We’ve lost half the restaurants at least. There’s so many shops that have gone out of business, and the neighborhood has really been struggling to come back,” says Pugliese.</p> <p>Liz Corona, with Mighty-O Donuts, has seen these challenges too.</p> <p>“I feel like the working-from-home aspect has caused that lack of influx of people,” says Corona.</p> <p>The Downtown Seattle Association has been monitoring the return-to-work numbers and says they’re hopeful about what they’ve seen this summer.</p> <p>“We’re seeing a lot more office workers today than we were six months ago. We had the most in the last month, this August, since the start of the pandemic,” says Scholes.</p> <p>He adds that tourism is also helping with downtown recovery. More than 3 million visitors came to Seattle last month, and the UC Berkeley study doesn’t include the summer numbers.</p> <p>“We did lag (behind) other cities back in the spring, but if you look at the three most recent months, downtown has been rocking and rolling,” says Scholes.</p> <p>He says in August more people are living downtown than ever before, and hotel occupancy rates in Seattle were one of the country’s highest.</p> <p>Pugliese agrees that he noticed an increase in foot traffic over the past month, a trend he hopes will continue.</p> <p>“It’s a lot better than it was a few months ago,” says Pugliese.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Seattle mayor: ‘our streets our unsafe’</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/our-streets-are-unsafe-seattle-mayor-says-after-rideshare-driver-shot-and-killed">https://komonews.com/news/local/our-streets-are-unsafe-seattle-mayor-says-after-rideshare-driver-shot-and-killed</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE, Wash. — Thursday, Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell and Interim Police Chief Adrian Diaz walked down the steps of City Hall and met dozens of rallying rideshare drivers. The protestors, who at one point blocked 4th avenue, called for safety changes and justice after a rideshare driver was shot and killed Sunday night while working as a driver.</p> <p>Fellow drivers and the family of 48-year-old Mohamed Kediye went to city hall with several goals: get the attention of city leaders, ask them questions and have them commit to making changes.</p>

“We seek justice,” Mayor Bruce Harrell said to the crowd, vowing they will do everything they can to bring the killer to justice. “The fact of the matter is that our streets are unsafe,” Harrell said.

The mayor asked for the help of rideshare drivers, but committed to making change and finding ways to create a new policy. However, those safety changes are something that could take a while, as crimes in the city do not slow down.

“Many of you in the rideshare industry, you know that industry better than me. Our best ideas on how to keep you safe, are going to come from you. What we commit to doing, is in the next weeks and months, to understand what safety looks like,” Harrell said.

Aside from discussing policy, the family of Kediye also talked to the interim Seattle police chief.

Few details about Kediye’s shooting death have been released, police officials said the reason is to protect the integrity of the investigation.

A family member shared their frustrations, asking Diaz why it took so long for them to be notified by police about Kediye’s death, “why did it take so long? I imagine that if he did not go that night, we found out at 1 am!” Police said that Kediye died at the scene. Officers said they responded at 8:30 pm that night.

“I will try to figure out why we didn’t make contact,” Diaz responded to the family, “I will make sure we do a better job in reaching out.”

Throughout the afternoon rideshare drivers told KOMO’s Paul Rivera that they did not feel safe going on their routes, especially after the death of Kediye.

Thursday, KOMO reached out to Uber and Lyft for comment on this story, but has not yet heard back.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Statewide critical blood shortage</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/washington-suffering-statewide-blood-shortage">https://komonews.com/news/local/washington-suffering-statewide-blood-shortage</a>
GIST	<p>The state of Washington is still facing a critical blood shortage, but now that students are headed back to the classroom the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and Northwest Blood Coalition share that it’s a crucial time to improve our blood supply.</p> <p>“During summer time people start going out of town and this summer in particular with the wonderful weather people started doing activities and they tend to forget about the importance of blood donations,” said Juan Cotto, Senior Government Affairs and Community Engagement Strategist for Bloodworks NW.</p> <p>Cotto tells us blood transfusions are still the #1 procedure done in hospitals. He said they’ve seen fewer people coming in the past few months, but adds to get the blood that’s needed, donations are critical.</p> <p>“We depend upon blood donations from high school and college students. There’s a gap in the summer and now that students are coming back to school and summer is ending it’s the perfect time to engage with the community,” said Cotto.</p> <p>Cotto explains that 25% of their blood donations come from students, which is why the return to class is such a crucial time for them. Others like Ray Dubicki, who’s been donating for a few years now said he’s making it his mission to help those relying on blood.</p> <p>“There’s a lot of people who can’t donate blood for different reasons so since I get to be a universal donor I try to do it as often as I can,” said Dubicki.</p> <p>Back when the pandemic hit an all-time high, Dubicki tells us he was hesitant about donating but realized his blood means the life or death of someone in need.</p>

	<p>“All the car accidents that tend to happen I mean there’s so much automobile death and things like that’s really where a lot of the blood need tends to be in my mind,” said Dubicki.</p> <p>The pandemic also stopped blood drives from happening at schools, Bloodworks NW shares that they are working on getting them back up and running. Those eligible to donate are urged to schedule an appointment or visit a blood donation center near you.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 US: \$600M additional supplies Ukraine</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/world/europe/biden-ukraine-military-aid.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/world/europe/biden-ukraine-military-aid.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Days after Russia’s humiliating rout in northeastern Ukraine, the Biden administration said on Thursday that it would send an additional \$600 million in military supplies to Ukraine, including more artillery ammunition.</p> <p>The new shipment — which will also include counterartillery radar, counterdrone systems and mine-clearing equipment — continues the Pentagon’s recent trend of sending large amounts of ammunition that Ukraine needs to carry out heavy fighting in the country’s south, east and northeast.</p> <p>The latest drawdown of military goods from Pentagon stockpiles — the 21st since the invasion began in February — was announced just hours after President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, held their <a href="#">first face-to-face meeting since the war began</a>, amid signs that Moscow lacked the full support of its most powerful international ally following Ukraine’s stunning comeback in the country’s northeast.</p> <p>“We are delivering the arms and equipment that Ukraine’s forces are utilizing so effectively as they continue their successful counteroffensive against Russia’s invasion,” Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken said in a statement. “President Biden has been clear we will support the people of Ukraine for as long as it takes.”</p> <p>Notably, this shipment did not include the MGM-140 Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMS, long-range guided missiles that can strike targets up to 190 miles away.</p> <p>Since Ukraine’s successful offensive, President Volodymyr Zelensky has renewed his request for ATACMS from President Biden, but so far has been rebuffed. The Pentagon has instead provided thousands of satellite-guided rockets and 16 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System launchers, or HIMARS, to fire them. Those rockets have struck more than 400 Russian ammunition depots, command posts and radars.</p> <p>The HIMARS can carry six guided rockets at a time, each of which can strike targets nearly 50 miles away — a range that Pentagon officials say covers the vast majority of Ukraine’s intended targets. By comparison, a HIMARS launcher can carry only one of the larger ATACMS missiles at a time before needing to reload.</p> <p>The new shipment also includes additional guided rockets for the HIMARS, as well as 36,000 rounds for 105-millimeter howitzers, and 1,000 precision-guided 155-millimeter shells, according to a Pentagon statement. Both weapons systems have become staples in Ukraine’s Western-supplied arsenal against Russia.</p> <p>The United States has now committed \$15.1 billion in military aid to Ukraine since the invasion — more than 40 percent of which has come in the past six weeks.</p> <p>Ukrainian and American officials said the now weekly or biweekly Pentagon announcements of new shipments of weapons and munitions from American inventories have given Kyiv’s senior commanders the confidence to plan complex simultaneous offensives, like those in Kherson in the south and near Kharkiv in the northeast.</p>

	Those operations were discussed in a phone call Thursday between Jake Sullivan, Mr. Biden's national security adviser, and Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and their Ukrainian counterparts, according to a statement from General Milley's office that provided no other details.
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 School districts lure: 4-day school weeks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/school-districts-facing-shortages-lure-teachers-with-four-day-weeks-11663247782?mod=hp_listb_pos1">https://www.wsj.com/articles/school-districts-facing-shortages-lure-teachers-with-four-day-weeks-11663247782?mod=hp_listb_pos1</a>
GIST	<p>Districts facing teacher shortages are increasingly turning to four-day school weeks as a means <a href="#">to attract and retain staff</a>, despite objections from some parents over child-care demands and some evidence of lower test scores.</p> <p>So far, the trend has been particularly pronounced in rural communities in some Midwestern and Southern states. Dozens of districts in Texas, Missouri, Colorado and Oklahoma have adopted four-day weeks in recent years.</p> <p>Other areas are also considering the switch. Cities including Elko, Nev. are debating four-day school schedules for some students.</p> <p>American districts have for years experimented with four-day school weeks as a way to save money or lessen commute times for students who live far away. But the trend <a href="#">has accelerated amid the pandemic</a>. At least 800 districts are using four-day school weeks this year, up from around 650 districts before the pandemic, according to Paul Thompson, a professor at Oregon State University who studies the topic.</p> <p>About half of U.S. states <a href="#">allow four-day weeks</a> under statutes that typically require minimum instructional hours or school days, according to Dr. Thompson. Most districts that move to a shorter school week increase the amount of instructional time each day, he said.</p> <p>The new, pandemic-era wave of districts switching to four day weeks has been driven largely by administrators who view a shortened week as a perk for attracting teachers. Superintendent Chris Heslinga of Maysville, Mo., said he made the decision to switch to a four-day week in his district this year because it has become increasingly difficult to staff schools in small, rural districts such as his.</p> <p>Maysville is taking Mondays off and adding a half-hour of instructional time to Tuesdays through Fridays to meet the state requirements for hours, Mr. Heslinga said. In the district's elementary schools, the extra time is used for longer lessons in core subjects such as reading and math. Students in middle school and high school use the time to catch up in classes in which they have fallen behind, or as a study-hall period, he said.</p> <p>Mr. Heslinga said the district hasn't yet decided whether it will make the four-day week permanent. But he says the move has helped the district staff schools.</p> <p>"Our ultimate goal was to attract and retain staff. And currently right now, this year we started the year off with every position filled," said Mr. Heslinga. "That's awesome."</p> <p>Little empirical evidence exists yet to show whether schools with four-day weeks are doing better retaining staff, but the trend is gathering steam nationwide as districts seek an edge in the competition for teachers, according to Dr. Thompson.</p> <p>A 2021 report conducted by Rand Corp. found that parents, teachers and students in districts with four-day weeks responded favorably to the shortened schedules. Teachers and families said the arrangements provided more time for recovery from busy schedules and that students learned at least as much in a four-day week.</p>

But the Santa Monica, Ca.-based research organization found that districts that adopted four-day weeks in the prepandemic study experienced slower gains in math and reading scores on state exams, compared with similar districts with five-day schedules.

The differences, although slight, could have significant impact over time, said Christopher Doss, one of the authors of the study. “Essentially, the four-day school week hurt student achievement,” he said.

Mr. Doss said that the slower academic growth experienced in districts with four-day weeks could be the result of fewer instructional hours.

Districts with four-day school weeks in the Rand study had an average of 1,156 instructional hours, compared with an average of 1,214 instructional hours for those with five-day school weeks, according to Mr. Doss.

Some parents in districts that have switched to four-day weeks, or are considering doing so, have expressed concerns over increased demands for child care caused by the extra school-free day.

The first wave of districts adopting four-day weeks began amid the recession around 2008, when schools sought to save money by moving to fewer instructional days, according to Dr. Thompson.

Most districts that made the switch only achieved savings of 1% or 2% of their total budgets, according to Dr. Thompson, but that didn’t deter more schools from adopting a four-day schedule. A Wall Street Journal review found that about 600 districts in at least 22 states were using a four-day schedule by 2018, up from about 120 districts in 17 states a decade earlier.

Jessica Ebersold, a kindergarten instructor in Maysville, said the new schedule “is definitely a perk.”

Ms. Ebersold said in previous years she spent most Sundays making lesson plans and arranging her classroom. But this year, she is more likely to take the day off with her family.

“It’s extremely nice to have a full Saturday and Sunday recovering and resting, or doing whatever it is that we need to do mentally to prepare for the next week,” she said.

Concerns over supervision or academics haven’t damped enthusiasm for shortened weeks for some parents. Denise Shelman, whose daughter, Brinley, age 17, is a senior at the high school in Maysville, said having Mondays off gives Brinley time to recover from a demanding schedule that includes a full slate of academic classes, sports practice, work with the school yearbook and a job on weekends.

“Our kids are a lot more involved in activities and work, and I think they kind of need this time to regroup,” said Ms. Shelman. “I think it’s great for mental health.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Overpriced housing? Rent indefinitely
SOURCE	<a href="https://crosscut.com/news/2022/09/seattles-overpriced-housing-market-some-opt-rent-indefinitely">https://crosscut.com/news/2022/09/seattles-overpriced-housing-market-some-opt-rent-indefinitely</a>
GIST	<p>Homeownership is the American Dream. Nearly <a href="#">three-quarters of Americans</a> see it as the highest mark of prosperity in their lives. Ownership provides autonomy. A long-term fixed monthly mortgage provides stability that renting likely won’t. And it builds equity and wealth. But at what point does the dream become impractically expensive?</p> <p>The <a href="#">average rent for a one-bedroom</a> in Seattle is \$2,418. A two-bedroom is \$3,573. But those figures pale in comparison with the mortgage payments for a median-priced, \$860,000 home in Seattle. To afford that, a buyer would likely owe more than \$5,500 each month.</p>



For some Seattle renters, the math just doesn't add up anymore. Despite the advantages of homeownership, the financial leap can seem illogical, even if they likely could pull the money together to buy.

Arlen Proctor loves living on First Hill. He appreciates that he can walk most places, that the streets are bustling with a diverse cross-section of Seattleites, that he has easy access to the food and music scene and community of Capitol Hill.

Proctor loves it so much that he and his partner, Jennifer, have lived there for 12 years, in the same apartment. It's no coincidence that Arlen and Jennifer's stability has coincided with the rare good fortune of having a landlord who has barely raised the rent while they've lived there. He recognizes that's a particularly lucky "roll of the dice" in a city where rents have risen dramatically [over the past decade](#) and people are often left in the lurch by [multi-hundred-dollar-a-month rent increases](#).

Proctor and his partner keep their eye on Redfin and Zillow and could likely afford to buy a house if they moved to the far edges of the city or into the suburbs. But paying significantly more each month to live in a suburban neighborhood holds little appeal.

"For me the idea of moving to a single-family residential neighborhood surrounded by other houses is the exact opposite of diverse living," said Proctor. "You have to go pretty far to buy a house for \$700,000-\$800,000. It's just a number on some level, but it's a strange sort of mental hoop to jump through to convince yourself it's worth it."

Similarly, they could probably find a condo, but the tradeoff would likely be a smaller home with a higher monthly payment. The median condo sale price in Seattle is about \$505,000 right now, according to Redfin.

Ultimately, Proctor said, the motivation to move would likely come from factors beyond their control, like their landlord having a change of heart about rents or selling the building to someone who dramatically increases their rent.

For Karan Goel, the cost of homebuying mixed with a sense of uncertainty keeps him from making the leap from renting to homeownership.

As a software engineer, he could make a mortgage work, but he doesn't think it makes sense to lock himself into a \$5,000-a-month payment. "That's a lot of rent. You can rent a decent house or big apartment for quite a bit less than that right now," he said.

A systemic and personal precariousness also leaves Goel unsure about buying.

"With climate change, I'm not sure how much I want to be locked into a single place," said Goel. "What happens by the end of the decade with wildfire smoke or extreme heat or flooding?"

Goel is also unsure about his ability to stay in the U.S. long-term. He is an Indian immigrant who has lived in Seattle for 10 years on a work visa. But he said the path to permanent residency or citizenship is challenging, which also makes a long-term housing commitment questionable.

Renting isn't all tradeoffs, however. Goel appreciates the flexibility it provides. When the pandemic began, he and his partner were renting a "very small" condo downtown. When the lease was up, they were able to move to a much larger place on the border between the University District and Ravenna.

Of course there are downsides to renting, even for people who believe in its value. Marci Taitt-Lamar was born and raised in Seattle. A few years ago she was a member of the city's volunteer [Renters' Commission](#), which provides policy recommendations and advice to city leaders and departments on how to improve conditions for renters.



Taitt-Lamar's time on the Renters' Commission coincided with the end of her time as a renter in 2020. After a decade of steady rent increases, she decided that it was worth the investment to buy a home and experience the stability of a fixed mortgage.

When she moved into her first Seattle studio apartment in 2013, her rent was \$1,200. By the time she left her last studio apartment, the landlord was trying to raise her rent from \$1,800 to \$2,200. The mortgage payments for her south Seattle home are about \$2,500 a month, but she reasoned that owning is an investment that will pay her back eventually.

"The only reason I considered homeownership is because I was incredibly destabilized by ludicrous rent increases," Taitt-Lamar said. "I happened to be in a good position at my job, making good money for a nonprofit. Not tech money, but enough that I had a little bit of savings."

During her time on the Renters' Commission, Taitt-Lamar and her fellow commissioners often discussed policy meant to help renters in Seattle's expensive, unstable market. She recognizes that many if not most renters do not have the option to become homeowners, nor are they renting by choice. But she still wants to see the city do more to provide them with some of the same sense of stability experienced by those who can afford to buy.

The Seattle City Council has taken a few steps in recent years to bolster renter rights in the name of housing stability, several of which were spearheaded by Councilmember Kshama Sawant. The new laws include a [ban on evictions](#) during the school year for renters with children, [a ban on evictions](#) during winter months, a [right to legal representation](#) during eviction proceedings and a requirement that landlords give at least a six-month notice for rent increases.

Councilmember Tammy Morales has also taken up the issue of renter stability with her Tenant's Bill of Rights, a collection of policies she's hoping to implement through the City Council. The council passed two pieces of her bill of rights last year: a right for [tenants to renew their lease](#) unless the landlord has just cause to end it, and increased eviction protection for renters who accrued rental debt during the COVID emergency.

"We need to make sure that regardless of whether you're choosing to rent or have no choice that you are ensured the same protection and stability of those who are able to afford to buy a home," said Morales. Looking ahead, Morales said she's working with Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda on legislation that would give tenants the right of first refusal to purchase their building if it was for sale. In some cases, tenants are [able to pull together the money](#) or work with a nonprofit to become owners.

"My office is trying to understand how we can build more community assets," said Morales. "It's an important way to stop the displacement that's happening. And, particularly in Black and brown communities, to build wealth for those folks who've been left out of these markets."

Morales supports the idea of rent control, but because the Washington Legislature banned rent control in 1981, she said it's an issue that must be taken up at the state level, not in City Council.

Calvin Jones is a renter, a former member of the Seattle Renters Commission and a housing advocate with the group Tech4Housing. He supports the tenant-rights work the council is doing and wants to see an increase in subsidies to help offset low-income renters' monthly costs. But he also thinks that increasing the supply of housing by changing zoning to allow more density will help give renters more power.

"The more scarce housing is, the more power landlords have over tenants," said Jones. "When there's nowhere else to move, landlords can charge higher rents. And they can keep their housing substandard in ways they might not if tenants had more options to say 'I'm just going to move somewhere else if you don't fix this.'"

HEADLINE	09/15 Monkeypox cases fall; no one knows why
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wired.com/story/monkeypox-cases-in-the-us-are-falling-no-one-knows-why/">https://www.wired.com/story/monkeypox-cases-in-the-us-are-falling-no-one-knows-why/</a>
GIST	<p><b>THE EXPLOSIVE US</b> monkeypox epidemic, now four months old, appears to be slowing down—although new cases, and serious complications, are still arising. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced this week that two men in Colorado and Washington, DC, developed grave <a href="#">neurological problems</a> that left them using walkers. Health authorities in California say a man there died as a result of monkeypox infection, and Texas experts are evaluating the death of a <a href="#">man in that state</a> as well.</p> <p>With 22,774 cases, the US has racked up almost two-fifths of the world’s total. Nevertheless, a recent <a href="#">CDC assessment</a> says the epidemic’s “rate of growth is slowing.” In July, it took only eight days for the US case count to double; it takes approximately 25 days for the same to happen now. That the epidemic may be slowing is unquestionably good news. But there’s a catch: No one is quite sure why.</p> <p>The drop in cases is almost certainly due in part to people changing their behavior. In a <a href="#">recent survey</a> of gay and bisexual men, who are at most risk of infection, half said they had reduced their number of partners or types of sexual encounters. It may also be due to protection from the monkeypox vaccine, though that effort has <a href="#">rolled out slowly</a> and a <a href="#">recent preprint</a> (which is not yet peer-reviewed) questions the vaccine’s effectiveness. Or the decline could simply be due to the virus burning itself out as it exhausts the number of people likely to be exposed to it—a remote possibility, but one that researchers have to consider.</p> <p>Discovering which scenario is correct is important because that knowledge could help predict what happens next. Behavior change regarding sex—using barrier methods, abstaining—is difficult to sustain long-term, because pleasure is a powerful motivator. For evidence, look at how we’ve never stopped syphilis from circulating despite centuries of trying. (Or, for that matter, never stopped unwanted pregnancies from occurring.) Because behavior change can lapse, <a href="#">protection via vaccines</a> would likely be more durable—but only if they are successfully administered to the people who most need them, and only if they create lasting immunity. Not understanding the reasons for the decline makes it difficult to determine where the most effort, and the most money, should be spent: in campaigns for vaccination, for behavior change, or both.</p> <p>Researchers say it’s far too early to know. “We’re always trying to make these calls very, very early in the game,” says Anne Rimoin, an epidemiologist and professor at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. “But the truth is, there’s still a lot that has to play out before we can make that kind of assessment. We’re in the to-be-determined phase.”</p> <p>Part of the problem is that, despite these months of global emergency response, monkeypox remains an <a href="#">under-researched disease</a>. Though it was endemic in several African countries for years before it broke worldwide in May, few researchers in rich countries considered it a priority. Until now, most epidemiological knowledge was gathered in rural communities where the main route of infection was from animals to humans, not from person to person. “The big problem with monkeypox is that all the data we have are from central and western Africa,” says Andrew Lover, an epidemiologist and assistant professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst School of Public Health and Health Sciences. “We just really have no idea of what monkeypox looks like in a dense urban environment.”</p> <p>Add to that: There’s little past experience with the vaccine, known as Jynneos in the US, being used against this disease. It was only approved by the US Food and Drug Administration <a href="#">in 2019</a>, primarily for the prevention of smallpox in case that virus—eradicated from circulation by an earlier vaccine, but retained in two labs—was ever used as a biological weapon. Jynneos underwent human safety studies but was never tested for efficacy against monkeypox in people; those estimates are based on <a href="#">animal work</a>. It has never been available commercially in the US, but was instead held in the National Strategic Stockpile as a safer alternative to that older smallpox vaccine, which can cause dangerous reactions in people with damaged immune systems. It was released to health departments only on the <a href="#">rare occasions</a> when an infected traveler accidentally carried the virus into the US.</p>

As a result, “we have no estimate of vaccine efficacy, given the modes of transmission that we are dealing with, which are very different than the modes of transmission that we traditionally see,” Rimoin says. Now, of course, Jynneos is being administered everywhere, but it’s too early to draw conclusions about how much immunity those shots are creating. The vaccination campaign has been uneven: At first, there was so much demand in big coastal cities that men lined up for hours, online appointment dashboards filled up in minutes, and to stretch supplies, clinics held back on the second doses that lock in immunity. In response, the White House proposed a dose-splitting strategy that increased availability, though at the cost of requiring a different injection technique that some health care workers were unfamiliar with. Now, clinics in cities that were swamped by the first wave, such as New York, are posting thousands of [new appointments regularly](#) and are able to give second doses.

In some areas, in fact, there may be an oversupply. “Our demand has gone down significantly,” says Philip Huang, a physician and director of the Dallas County, Texas Health and Human Services Department. “We have empty appointments every day. We’re giving second doses.”

Health departments based their appointment offerings and vaccine allocation requests on their sense of how many men who have sex with men live in their communities, so those open appointments suggest that everyone who is eligible for protection may not be receiving it. They may not know they are at risk, they may fear the stigma of stepping forward, or they may not be aware the vaccine is available because overworked health departments do not have the time or personnel to craft precise messages to hard-to-reach groups. “We are still in an active public health emergency, a pandemic response, and our health department staffs are *tired*,” says Lori Tremmel Freeman, CEO of the National Association of County and City Health Officials.

And in a White House briefing this morning, federal health officials acknowledged those departments are strapped for cash to create their campaigns, in some cases moving money from HIV and STD programs to pay for vaccination workers and push out education. “Our local jurisdictions have received no resources specific for monkeypox,” CDC director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said. “It speaks to the need for supplemental funds.”

From here, a few different things could happen. People could accept the vaccine and either abstain from sex and skin-to-skin contact or practice safe sex rigorously, cases continue to decline, and the virus runs out of hosts. In another, vaccination doesn’t reach everyone who needs it, or isn’t efficacious enough to protect them, and people miss sex and skin contact enough to let their protective behaviors slip. Then case numbers rise again as monkeypox settles in to being a sex-adjacent infection, as common—and potentially as dangerous—as gonorrhea or syphilis can be.

There’s a third scenario, though, and some researchers eyeing the downward trend in cases worry that it already might be happening. In this one, monkeypox appears to vanish but actually sticks around. It moves into groups in which it is less detectable—women, for instance, in whom lesions might be internal and thus harder to see—or it finds [a new host in animals](#). Overall, it percolates at low enough levels to sustain itself. And then it bursts out again.

Andrew Noymer, an epidemiologist, demographer, and associate professor at the University of California, Irvine, [describes this](#) as “hyper-low endemicity.” This happened with smallpox, he points out. Accounts from before eradication describe what looks like a seasonal pattern, but even in the low months, transmission did not actually stop. It happens with influenza, which appears to vanish during warm weather as the case burden swaps from one hemisphere to the other. But work over decades has shown that some infections do occur in summer months.

It’s possible, Noymer argues, that this could happen for monkeypox as well. “Instead of hundreds of cases a day, nationwide, there could be a handful of cases a day,” he says. “Very low levels of disease can just go unnoticed. Monkeypox could just percolate through the same networks, causing mild cases until it starts becoming less mild again.”

	The problem, as almost all researchers agree right now, is that it's too soon to tell. There is not enough history to predict monkeypox's trajectory, and not enough data to model its behavior with precision. The immediate future becomes a gamble, in which we bet that we can improve our knowledge and containment before the virus reveals what it's capable of.
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Puyallup mobile home families settlement</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/community/puyallup-herald/ph-news/article265815401.html">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/community/puyallup-herald/ph-news/article265815401.html</a>
GIST	<p>Residents of a Puyallup mobile home park that was scheduled to close come October say they will get more time to move and more money after coming to an agreement with the developer Sept. 13.</p> <p>“This is life changing for the families who live here,” resident Saraim Nieto said in a news release. “Yesterday many families were facing homelessness. Today we are talking about down payments on new homes. The relief and joy that I see on my neighbors’ faces is incredible.”</p> <p>Home in Tacoma for All issued the news release on Sept. 14. The group is a grassroots coalition that advocates for sustainable and affordable housing in Tacoma and Pierce County.</p> <p>Timberlane Partners bought the property for \$6.5 million last year with plans to build about 230 apartments there, The News Tribune reported. Timberlane was not immediately reachable for comment about the agreement Home in Tacoma for All said was reached.</p> <p>Meridian Mobile Estates residents met with Timberlane Partners on Tuesday.</p> <p>The release from Home in Tacoma for All, which circulated on social media and was sent to reporters, said the settlement is valued at over \$600,000 and would give each household up to \$21,500 in addition to \$5,000 the developer had already promised. The Home in Tacoma for All release said that as part of the agreement residents would now have until the end of January 2023 to move out of the mobile home park at 202 27th Ave. SE. Before, they were told they had to move by next month.</p> <p>“Tenants were successful at the negotiating table yesterday because of their history of direct action and protests,” Zev Cook, Home in Tacoma for All organizer, said in the Sept. 14 news release. “We were able to leverage the power of organizing communities and to use the threat of further protests to achieve this result.”</p> <p>There are 23 or 24 families who will be affected by the agreement, Cook said.</p> <p>Residents expected to sign the contract Thursday night, but Home in Tacoma for All said Thursday that was being postponed.</p> <p>They planned to protest the developer in Seattle last week, but canceled the protest when Timberlane Partners agreed to meet the residents at the negotiating table, according to Home in Tacoma for All.</p> <p>Many residents gathered at Pioneer Park and attended the Puyallup City Council meeting on Aug. 23 to voice their concerns to the council.</p> <p>The city and state also offered some financial assistance to residents previously, including \$5,000 grants from the city. Some said it wasn't enough, given what they paid for their homes and renovations.</p> <p>The news release from Home in Tacoma for All argued that residents are still losing “a significant amount of value,” and that the average home at the park is valued at around \$80,000.</p> <p>The settlement Home in Tacoma for All said residents and the developer reached “will set a precedent for future evictions,” Cook said in the news release. Developers will be expected to pay, and Home in Tacoma for All is “ready and willing to take up those fights,” she said.</p>

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 CDC: rare complications from monkeypox</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/cdc-reports-rare-nerve-damage-complications-from-monkeypox/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/cdc-reports-rare-nerve-damage-complications-from-monkeypox/</a>
GIST	<p>DENVER — A Colorado man was one of two unlucky people who developed nerve damage after a monkeypox infection, and federal officials urged doctors to watch for the rare but serious complication.</p> <p>The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a report Tuesday describing the cases of two previously healthy men who had to be hospitalized because of nervous system complications from monkeypox. Almost 22,000 people nationwide have tested positive for monkeypox.</p> <p>Most people with monkeypox <a href="#">develop a rash</a>, which is often painful, and some have flu-like symptoms. Some develop only one or two lesions, and may not realize they have the virus.</p> <p>Serious complications from monkeypox are rare. <a href="#">One person was confirmed</a> to have died from monkeypox in California, and a person being treated for the virus died in Texas, though it's not yet clear if that was the cause of death.</p> <p>The Colorado patient was a man in his 30s who identified as gay and had no known health conditions before his infection. About nine days after he first noticed flu-like symptoms, he developed unexplained weakness and numbness in his legs and his left arm, and he was hospitalized.</p> <p>An MRI found spots in his brain and spinal cord where something had attacked the protective covering on the nerves. It's not yet clear if the virus directly invaded the patient's nervous system, or if an immune overreaction was responsible for the damage.</p> <p>While the Colorado patient's weakness improved, he still had to go to a rehabilitation facility and was using an assistive device to walk one month later. (An assistive device could be something like a walker or cane, though the CDC's report didn't specify.)</p> <p>The other patient, a man in his 30s who lived in Washington, D.C., had an even rougher time. He had to be placed on a ventilator, though he eventually recovered enough to go to a rehabilitation facility.</p> <p>Both patients received multiple drugs, including Tpoxx, an antiviral that was developed to treat smallpox but is <a href="#">being tried against monkeypox</a>. Both improved after a treatment that <a href="#">filtered their blood plasma</a>, though that could be coincidental.</p> <p>The CDC urged doctors caring for patients with monkeypox to track and report complications from the virus. The current outbreak was identified less than six months ago, so there isn't much data about how rare neurological complications are, or how best to treat to them.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 US: China, Russia military share weakness</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/16/china/china-military-cross-training-weakness-russia-ukraine-analysis-intl-hnk-ml/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/16/china/china-military-cross-training-weakness-russia-ukraine-analysis-intl-hnk-ml/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>China's military leaders share a potential weakness that has undermined their Russian counterparts in <a href="#">Ukraine</a> and could hamper their ability to wage a similar war, according to a new report from the US National Defense University.</p> <p>The report identifies a lack of cross-training as a possible Achilles' Heel within the People's Liberation Army (PLA), but analysts remain wary of underestimating China's capabilities and warn against comparisons with Russia.</p>



The report delved into the backgrounds of more than 300 of the PLA's top officers across its five services – army, navy, air force, rocket force and strategic support force – in the six years leading up to 2021. It found that in each service leaders were unlikely to have operational experience in any branch other than the one they began their careers in.

In other words, PLA soldiers stay soldiers, sailors stay sailors, airmen stay airmen. Rarely do they venture outside those silos, the report said, noting a sharp contrast to the US military, where cross-training has been a legal requirement since 1986.

The 73-page report went on to say that this “rigidity... could reduce China's effectiveness in future conflicts,” particularly in conflicts requiring high levels of joint-service action, and suggests PLA forces would become bogged down by the same sort of problems that have bedeviled their Russian counterparts in Ukraine, “where the overall cohesion of forces was low.”

Since the beginning of Russia's invasion of its neighbor seven months ago, deficiencies in the Russian military structure have become plain to outside observers.

In the recent [rout of Russian forces by a Ukrainian counteroffensive](#), Moscow's ground forces lacked air cover, analysts say, while earlier in the war, logistical problems played havoc with Russia's ability to resupply its forces – its [trucks lacked suitable tires for the terrain and kept breaking down](#) from a lack of maintenance.

According to the report's author Joel Wuthnow, the PLA's senior leaders could face similar problems due to their lack of cross-training.

“Operational commanders, for instance, rarely have career-broadening experience in logistics, and vice versa,” said the report by Wuthnow, a senior research fellow at the university's Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs.

“Operational commanders who never needed to gain a high level of understanding of logistics or maintenance might fail to use those forces optimally, paralleling another Russian failure in 2022.”

In a comparison of four-star rank commanders in 2021 – such as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs or the head of Indo-Pacific Command in the United States or leaders of the Central Military Commission or theater commands in China – all of the 40 US officers had joint-service experience compared to 77% of their 31 Chinese equivalents, the report found.

It also noted another key difference: In the US, almost all the four-star commanders had operational experience. In China, almost half were “professional political commissars.”

### **Don't underestimate the PLA**

Carl Schuster, a former director of operations at the US Pacific Command's Joint Intelligence Center in Hawaii, said the new report “is the best assessment of where China is at and going that I have seen.”

But he cautioned against using it as a predictor of how the PLA might fare in a Ukraine-like war as it had numerous other advantages over the Russian military.

China gives better training to new recruits and no longer relies on conscripts, he said, whereas the Russian army “relies on seven-month conscripts for 80-85% of its enlisted personnel.”

And, unlike Russia, China has a professional non-commissioned officer corps, he added.

Schuster, who now teaches at Hawaii Pacific University, estimated that China is about four or five years behind the US in terms of joint operation abilities – but warned recent exercises “suggest they are catching up.”



He cited [recent Chinese operations like those around Taiwan](#) after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited the island in early August as demonstrating this.

“The study’s unstated implication that the PLA may be unable to do effective joint ops is misplaced,” Schuster said.

The report by Wuthnow, who is also an adjunct professor at Georgetown University in Washington, also found demographic differences between Chinese and US leaders.

“Senior (Chinese) officers were homogenous in terms of age, education, gender, and ethnicity,” the report said.

Among the four-star ranks, Chinese officers were older on average than their American counterparts (64 vs. 60) and had more years in the military (46 vs. 40).

“US leadership was also more diverse, with two women and three African Americans, compared to a homogenous PLA leadership (entirely male and 99% Han Chinese),” the report said.

And one final stark difference: 58% of the US officers had served in a foreign country while none of the Chinese officers had overseas experience.

### **The Xi factor**

The report also noted how Chinese leader Xi Jinping has tightened his grip on the PLA’s leadership since taking control of the Chinese Communist Party in 2013.

Through his role as chairman of China’s Central Military Commission, Xi has been personally involved in the selection of senior officers, it said.

“All PLA officers are members of the Chinese Communist Party and must have enough political acumen to demonstrate loyalty to Xi and his agenda,” it said, noting that Xi rotates top officers geographically within China to prevent them from developing “patronage networks” that might one day threaten his leadership.

But it also noted that Xi has been careful to reward loyalty and patience in the senior officer corps.

“Xi Jinping has not skipped over a generation of people who had waited their turn to promote young Turks more familiar with modern conflict,” it said.

As those older officers reach retirement ages for their grade – as old as 68 for those on the Central Military Commission – their successors will bring more experience of the modern battlefield, including the newest technologies, the report said.

But the silos, reinforced by tradition and organizational culture, are expected to remain, it said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Friction mounts as border crossings soar
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/friction-white-house-dhs-officials-migrant-numbers-rise-rcna47770">https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/friction-white-house-dhs-officials-migrant-numbers-rise-rcna47770</a>
GIST	Friction between the Biden White House and senior officials at the Department of Homeland Security over how to handle immigration is mounting, according to internal documents and communications reviewed by NBC News, <a href="#">as the number of undocumented migrants crossing the southern border keeps rising</a> and Republican governors send migrants to more Democratic-run cities.

The White House has recently hosted a series of high-level meetings on immigration, where DHS officials have presented options, including flying migrants to the country's northern border with Canada to alleviate overcrowding on the U.S.-Mexico border, according to two U.S. officials familiar with the discussions.

Some DHS officials have openly expressed frustration at those meetings with the White House's reluctance to take a page from the book of Republican governors and begin transporting migrants to cities within the U.S., according to internal communications obtained by NBC News.

Under a plan proposed by DHS, migrants would be sent to such cities as Los Angeles, where shelters would get an advance warning to have time to prepare for the influx. [The plan is designed to be less chaotic](#) than what is happening now in Washington, [D.C.](#), New York, Chicago [and Martha's Vineyard](#) in Massachusetts. Officials in those places have been caught by surprise as [Republican governors in Texas, Arizona and Florida](#) have sent migrants north to make a political statement.

The discussions come as the number of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border is nearing 8,000 per day, according to data obtained by NBC News.

White House officials have previously set 9,000 per day as an internal trigger to begin what they refer to as "interior processing," where migrants are flown or bused from the border to interior cities where shelters can take care of them as they await reunification with family members and eventually their dates in immigration court.

But in recent meetings between Homeland Security officials and the White House, some DHS officials have advocated that the administration should start securing planes and planning for interior processing now, according to documents obtained by NBC News.

Homeland Security officials have expressed frustration among themselves that Republicans are sending migrants to cities in an effort to sow chaos and shape the national conversation on immigration, while White House officials have stalled DHS initiatives to send migrants to cities inside the country in a more organized manner, according to internal communications.

Some areas of the border, meanwhile, are experiencing such high numbers of undocumented migrants in recent weeks that they have overwhelmed the resources of Border patrol and local charities. In El Paso, Texas, for example, nearly 9,000 migrants have been released at bus stations because local shelters have no capacity to house them until they can arrange for their own transportation. Typically, shelters work with migrants and their family members to see that their bus or plane tickets are purchased and that they have the means and directions to make it to their final destinations in the U.S.

Covid restrictions under Title 42, which were imposed shortly after the pandemic began in 2020, remain in place, and more than 1 million migrants have been expelled back to Mexico or their home countries. The most common nationality among recent arrivals in El Paso, however, is Venezuelan. Venezuela has resisted taking back its migrants, and Mexico balks at accepting Venezuelans expelled from the U.S., which leaves the U.S. to make decisions about their fate.

The White House, DHS and Customs and Border Protection did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 USMC rescinds Covid vax penalties</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/politics/marine-corps-rescinds-penalties-service-members-seeking-vaxx-religious-accommodations">https://www.foxnews.com/politics/marine-corps-rescinds-penalties-service-members-seeking-vaxx-religious-accommodations</a>
GIST	The U.S. Marine Corps is rolling back strict <a href="#">punishments for service members</a> seeking religious exemptions to the COVID-19 vaccine, including ending involuntary terminations and delays of promotions for those refusing the shot.

According to a new "interim guidance," signed Sept. 14 and posted quietly online, the message "amends actions" directed toward unvaccinated Marines whose religious accommodation requests were denied and who appealed the decision.

The memo states that the amended guidance comes after a U.S. Federal District Court in Florida issued a preliminary injunction on Aug. 18 prohibiting the Marines from taking "certain actions" against those seeking religious exemptions.

The guidance says the "Marine Corps will not enforce any order to accept COVID-19 vaccination, administratively separate, or retaliate against Marines in the class for asserting statutory rights under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA)."

RFRA is the federal law that prohibits the government from "substantially burden[ing] a person's exercise of religion even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability."

"Involuntary administrative separation processing of class members for refusing COVID-19 vaccination is suspended," the memo details.

In addition, it directs commanders to "pause all administrative actions related to the involuntary separation of a class member, regardless of the current status of the separation process (e.g., no orders will be given to receive the vaccine, no counselings will be issued for refusing the vaccine, no administrative separation boards will be conducted, no DD-214s will be issued)."

The memo also states that vaccination status cannot be "considered or referenced" in fitness reports or other performance evaluations for service members.

The Marine's previous directive required commanders to delay the promotions of "any officer and delay/restrict the promotion of any enlisted member refusing the vaccine," but the updated guidance outlines a series of steps to walk that specific punishment back.

However, if the preliminary injunction by the federal court is terminated, the guidance says Marines may still be subject to separation from the military for refusing to meet the vaccination requirement.

The Marine Corp's walking back of their strict guidelines comes the day after Fox News Digital reported that the Navy had quietly rolled back punishments for SEALs seeking religious exemptions and additionally that the Pentagon's inspector general said the Department of Defense is in "potential noncompliance" with [standards for reviewing and denying](#) religious exemptions to the COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

According to an internal memo by the Pentagon's Acting Inspector General Sean O'Donnell to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, the IG writes that he reviewed "concerning denials of religious liberty accommodation requests from COVID-19 vaccination requirements."

"We found a trend of generalized assessments rather than the individualized assessment that is required by Federal law and [DoD and Military Service policies](#)," the IG said in the report.

In addition, Fox News Digital exclusively obtained a pair of U.S. Army fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) from multiple sources detailing COVID-19 guidance issued on July 8 and 19, 2022, which [restricted unvaccinated soldiers](#) from engaging in any official travel without express approval from the upper echelons of the Army.

A spokesperson for the Marines did not respond to Fox News Digital's request for comment.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Climate change impacts healthcare services
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/climate-change-jeopardizes-health-care-services-report-89983636">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/climate-change-jeopardizes-health-care-services-report-89983636</a>

WASHINGTON -- Dr. Suzy Fitzgerald remembers looking out the windows as wildfire flames surrounded the hospital where she worked.

“We had fire in all three directions,” Fitzgerald recalled. “I thought, ‘Oh gosh, this is serious. We need to get these people out.’”

Fitzgerald helped with the evacuation of 122 patients from Kaiser Permanente’s Santa Rosa Medical Center on that night nearly five years ago, as the blaze gobbled up homes and buildings across Northern California. The hospital, which had filled with smoke, closed for 17 days.

Medical centers around the country say that fires, flooding, heat waves and other extreme weather are jeopardizing medical services, damaging health care facilities and forcing patients to flee their hospital beds, according to a report released Thursday by the House Ways and Means Committee.

At a hearing, Dr. Parinda Khatri, the CEO of Cherokee Health Systems, told the committee that a pediatric clinic in Knoxville, Tennessee, was forced to close for 10 days this summer during a heatwave after the air conditioning system broke down.

Nearby wildfires forced evacuations at facilities in Oregon during 2020, Elizabeth Schneck of Providence Health told the committee.

A majority of the 63 hospital systems and community health centers that responded to the committee's questionnaire say they have experienced at least one extreme weather event at some point in the last five years, with many of those saying they had experienced more than one.

The health centers reported a wide range of economic impact from the weather events, with the emergencies they experienced costing between \$28,000 to \$22 million to cover building damages, closures, evacuations, overtime for employees or deferred elective procedures, for example.

The organizations are not necessarily representative of hospital systems nationwide and may overrepresent both “large health systems with more resources to implement high-cost interventions and small community-based providers on the frontline with limited supports,” according to the report.

The report indicated that medical facilities are investing more resources, staff and planning to prepare for emergency weather-related events.

Fitzgerald said officials at the Kaiser Permanente facility took a hard look at its plans after the 2017 wildfire evacuation and developed new policies, including a new information tag staff attaches to patients with details about their condition and needs during an evacuation.

“It made for a much more orderly response,” Fitzgerald said.

Paul Biddinger, the chief preparedness and continuity officer for the Mass General Brigham health care system in New England, said they had hired climate scientists and engineers to examine its 30 buildings after watching hurricanes and floods devastate hospitals in New Orleans, New York City and Kentucky over the last two decades.

“Our health care system is clearly vulnerable,” said Biddinger. “But many people, including leaders of the health care entities themselves, often do not appreciate the degree of vulnerability.”

Many of the facilities included in the report indicated that they’ve put together working groups or have staff dedicated to climate change issues.

New York’s Northwell health, the state’s largest health care provider, has an emergency command room where staff monitors the news across televisions. Two of the screens are always turned to the weather.

From flooding that's made it difficult for ambulances navigating roads to gusty winds and snow that have threatened power, the health care system has had to deal with more than 20 weather events in the last five years, said Donna Drummond, Northwell's chief expense and chief sustainability officer.

Extreme weather is also a consideration when Northwell constructs a new facility or hospital, she said.

"Climate change is here, it's happening, it's impacting us," Drummond said. "We need to be resilient. Our facilities need to be able to withstand storms and that were prepared for these events."

The health care system itself is a driver of climate change, accounting for an estimated 10% of the carbon dioxide emitted annually in the U.S. President Joe Biden has set a goal of cutting U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by at least half by 2030.

House Ways and Means Chairman Richard Neal, D-Mass., urged the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid to release guidelines for health care centers to track and report those emissions.

"It's clear more climate-related weather events and rising emissions will continue to worsen health care outcomes, and the time for action is now," he said.

Roughly half of the facilities responding to the committee said they are tracking their carbon footprint or using programs to reduce their carbon footprint.

But many health care organizations are not doing enough to reduce pollution, Jodi Sherman, an associate professor at Yale School of Medicine told the House Ways and Means Committee.

"Voluntary measures are insufficient to transform the health care sector," Sherman said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 Iran: US must lift sanctions for nuclear deal</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/16/irans-raisi-says-sanctions-must-be-lifted-to-reach-nuclear-deal">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/16/irans-raisi-says-sanctions-must-be-lifted-to-reach-nuclear-deal</a>
GIST	<p><b>Samarkand, Uzbekistan</b> – Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has said United States sanctions must be lifted to reach <a href="#">a nuclear agreement</a>, and there must be guarantees established to ensure their "lasting removal".</p> <p>Speaking exclusively to Al Jazeera's Resul Serdar in Uzbekistan, the Iranian president also said that it was not yet time to have face-to-face talks with the United States, and he <a href="#">questioned the sincerity of Washington</a> in wanting to reach a deal with Tehran.</p> <p>"Removal of sanctions should be accompanied with the resolution of safeguards. There are some political and baseless accusations against Islamic Republic of Iran when it comes to safeguard issues," Raisi told Al Jazeera in the city of Samarkand, where he attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting on Thursday.</p> <p>"So, we should finalise these safeguard issues," he said.</p> <p>"Regarding the guarantees, if we have the trustworthy guarantees, and we have the lasting removal of the sanctions, not temporary removal of sanctions, and if there is a lasting solution for the safeguard issues, for sure it is possible to reach agreement," the president said.</p> <p><a href="#">Months of indirect talks</a> between Iran and US President Joe Biden's administration to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal have hit a dead end.</p> <p>Former US President <a href="#">Donald Trump</a> withdrew from the <a href="#">2015 deal</a> under which Tehran had agreed to scale back its uranium enrichment programme and promised not to pursue nuclear weapons in return for the lifting of crippling sanctions, which also allowed Iran to sell its oil and gas worldwide.</p>

The 2015 deal was [signed in Vienna](#) by the US, UK, France, Germany, Russia, China, the European Union, and Iran. The IAEA had repeatedly confirmed at the time that Tehran was meeting its nuclear commitments fully under the terms of the 2015 agreement.

#### ‘American sincerity’

Al Jazeera’s Serdar said the Iranian president did not see any benefit in face-to-face meetings with US officials yet.

“He said that Iran has tried that before, has done that before, and it didn’t work out,” Serdar said.

“He also questioned American sincerity, the sincerity of the American approach to this issue. He said that if Americans want to finalise a deal, why do they impose new sanctions on Iran in the middle of the negotiations?”

The US recently imposed new sanctions on Iranian companies for helping [transfer Iranian drones](#) to Russia for use in Ukraine, as well as for an Iranian ministry accused of being involved in a [cyberattack on Albania](#), an allegation that Iran has called baseless.

The IAEA [said on September 7](#) that it was “not in a position to provide assurance that Iran’s nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful”.

Tehran has long maintained that its nuclear programme is focused on nuclear energy and not weapons. Iran’s economy and people have been hit hard by decades of international sanctions.

A United Nations rapporteur published a report this week that detailed the effects of decades of embargoes on Iran and called for their removal. The report’s author, Alena Douhan, said that sanctions had affected nearly every aspect of life in Iran.

The provision of medicines and medical equipment to Iran was “severely undermined” by sanctions on finance, trade, shipping, insurance and over-compliance on the part of foreign businesses and suppliers, Douhan said.

“These constitute serious impediments to the enjoyment of the right to the highest attainable standard of health by all Iranians,” she said.

Sanctions have been imposed on Iran since 1979 when the country’s Islamic revolution took place.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 France air traffic controllers on strike</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/business-62924064">https://www.bbc.com/news/business-62924064</a>
GIST	<p>Tens of thousands of passengers are set to be affected by a French air traffic control strike on Friday.</p> <p>Ryanair has cancelled 420 flights, most of which were scheduled to fly over France, affecting 80,000 passengers.</p> <p>EasyJet has cut 76 flights, British Airways has cancelled 22, while Air France said it would only run 45% of its short-haul flights.</p> <p>Separately, on Monday 15% of Heathrow Airport's schedule will be altered during Queen Elizabeth's state funeral.</p> <p>To ensure the skies over London fall quiet during the events, there will be flight cancellations, including 100 British Airways flights and four Virgin Atlantic flights.</p> <p><b>French strikes</b></p>



The strike action in France is being taken by the SNCTA air traffic control union in a row over wages, as inflation soars, and recruitment.

Ryanair says all passengers affected have been notified. The low-cost carrier normally operates more than 3,000 flights per day.

Neal McMahon, Ryanair operations director, said it was "inexplicable" that thousands of European citizens and visitors "will have their travel plans unfairly disrupted".

"It is inexcusable that passengers who are not even flying to or from France are disrupted," he said.

He said French laws protect French domestic flights, but not ones flying over the country.

"It is time that the European Union step in and protect overflights so that European passengers are not repeatedly held to ransom by a tiny French air traffic control union," he said.

Budget rival EasyJet said it had cancelled flights at the request of French authorities.

EasyJet said: "While this is outside of our control, we would like to apologise to our customers for any inconvenience they may experience."

British Airways said along with the 22 cancelled flights to and from Heathrow, there could be some extra delays on Friday.

Air France is only running 45% of its short and medium-haul flights, and 90% of long-haul. It has also warned that delays and last-minute cancellations cannot be ruled out.

The flight cuts affect the whole of France, the French civil aviation authority DGAC said. It added that it was currently working with the European air travel regulator Eurocontrol to help airlines avoid the country's air space.

Strikes across the aviation industry caused severe disruption to Europe's summer traffic, including ground and cabin personnel, who are seeking pay rises to cope with increased living costs amid high inflation.

In July, several strikes by firefighters and staff at Paris's Charles De Gaulle airport led to cancellations and delays.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Hundreds dying of Covid daily ahead of fall
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/hundreds-americans-dying-covid-19-day-ahead-fall/story?id=89764674">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/hundreds-americans-dying-covid-19-day-ahead-fall/story?id=89764674</a>
GIST	<p>It has been more than two and half years since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and despite a return to a new form of normality for many people across the country, there are still hundreds of Americans dying from the virus every day, a grim reality of the pandemic's continued destruction.</p> <p>The U.S. is currently averaging just under 400 daily COVID-19 related deaths. Although the daily number of fatalities is far lower than it was at the nation's peak, in January 2021, 3,400 Americans died of COVID-19 each day.</p> <p>"The seven-day average daily deaths are still too high, about 375 per day — well above the around 200 deaths a day we saw earlier this spring and, in my mind, far too high for a vaccine-preventable disease," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said during a White House press briefing with the COVID-19 response team last week.</p> <p>Over the last seven days, the U.S. has reported 2,500 deaths, and since the beginning of 2022, more than 221,000 Americans have died because of COVID-19.</p>

The vast majority of Americans who are currently dying of COVID-19 are over the age of 75. Although more than 92% of Americans of the age of 65 have been fully vaccinated, many are not up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations, and are at a higher risk for severe disease due to the virus.

The persistently high death rate, alongside concerns over the potential threat of a COVID-19 resurgence, has reignited the call for all Americans to get vaccinated. It is particularly important for those older or more vulnerable to get vaccinated and boosted with the new bivalent shots, which target not only the original strain of the virus, but also the omicron variant, experts said.

"We're calling on all Americans: Roll up your sleeve to get your COVID-19 vaccine shot," White House COVID-19 Coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha said during a press briefing last week. "If you're 12 and above and previously vaccinated, it's time to go get an updated COVID-19 shot."

As the vaccine rollout expands, Jha added the administration plans to put "special efforts" into reaching older Americans, people living in congregate care settings such as nursing homes, and others who may be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

Throughout the summer, COVID-19 case and hospitalization numbers have oscillated widely across the country. Numbers appeared to be on the decline, but in recent weeks, the number of U.S. wastewater sites reporting increases in the presence of COVID-19 in their samples appears to be back on the rise, after declines seen throughout the latter part of the summer.

In the U.S., about 50% of wastewater sites, which are currently providing data to the CDC, have reported an increase in the presence of the COVID-19 virus in their wastewater, over the last 15 days, up from the 40% of sites reporting increases, last month, according to federal data.

Several sites across the Northeast, in particular, appear to be seeing notable increases. In Boston, wastewater levels had plateaued, after a spring and summer surge, but in recent weeks, data indicates that COVID-19 sampling levels have increased again to their highest level in two months.

However, it is important to note that data is unavailable for many areas of the country, particularly across much of the South and the West.

The U.S. is currently reporting about 70,000 new cases a day. This comes as testing levels have plummeted in recent months, with now under 350,000 tests reported each day — the lowest total since the onset of the pandemic.

However, hospital admission levels continue to fall nationally. About 4,500 virus-positive Americans are entering the hospital each day, down by about 8.4% in the last week.

There are currently about 33,000 virus-positive Americans receiving care in the U.S., down from about 37,000 total patients receiving care, one week ago. Overall, the totals remain significantly lower than at the nation's peak in January, when there were more than 160,000 patients hospitalized with the virus.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Mississippi lifts Jackson boil water notice
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/mississippi-lifts-boil-water-notice-jackson-residents/story?id=89978856">https://abcnews.go.com/US/mississippi-lifts-boil-water-notice-jackson-residents/story?id=89978856</a>
GIST	<p>Mississippi ended its boil water notice for all of Jackson's residents on Thursday, the state's health department announced.</p> <p>The news comes nearly two weeks after water pressure returned to the state capital's residents after days of a <a href="#">water shortage crisis</a> that impacted thousands of Jacksonians.</p>

	<p>A boil water notice was in effect in Jackson since July 29, with the city saying that it needed "two rounds of clear samples" before it could lift the notice, adding: "We will alert residents as soon as this happens."</p> <p>"On Tuesday, the Mississippi State Department of Health began officially conducting tests of the water quality. They collected 120 samples for two consecutive days," Gov. Tate Reeves said at a press conference on Thursday. "We can now announce we have restored clean water to the city of Jackson."</p> <p>Last month, at least 180,000 people went without reliable drinking water in Jackson after pumps at the main water treatment plant failed.</p> <p>Reeves declared a state of emergency on Aug. 30 to address the issue.</p> <p>At Thursday's press conference, Reeves touted Mississippi's efforts in fixing the water issues in Jackson, including increasing how much water is produced, <a href="#">restoring water pressure</a> and installing an emergency pump at the water treatment facility.</p> <p>City and state officials have been helping to distribute drinkable and non-drinkable water to residents.</p> <p>The state distributed nearly 12 million bottles of water, but distribution will end soon since the boil water notice has been lifted, Stephen McCraney, the executive director of the state Emergency Management Agency, said at the press conference.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 UN warns: 345M face acute food insecurity</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/warns-345-million-people-marching-starvation-89993780">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/warns-345-million-people-marching-starvation-89993780</a>
GIST	<p>UNITED NATIONS -- The U.N. food chief warned Thursday that the world is facing "a global emergency of unprecedented magnitude," with up to 345 million people marching toward starvation — and 70 million pushed closer to starvation by the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>David Beasley, executive director of the U.N. World Food Program, told the U.N. Security Council that the 345 million people facing acute food insecurity in the 82 countries where the agency operates is 2½ times the number of acutely food insecure people before the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020.</p> <p>He said it is incredibly troubling that 50 million of those people in 45 countries are suffering from very acute malnutrition and are "knocking on famine's door."</p> <p>"What was a wave of hunger is now a tsunami of hunger," he said, pointing to rising conflict, the pandemic's economic ripple effects, climate change, rising fuel prices and the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>Since Russia invaded its neighbor on Feb. 24, Beasley said, soaring food, fuel and fertilizer costs have driven 70 million people closer to starvation.</p> <p>Despite the agreement in July allowing Ukrainian grain to be shipped from three Black Sea ports that had been blockaded by Russia and continuing efforts to get Russian fertilizer back to global markets, "there is a real and dangerous risk of multiple famines this year," he said. "And in 2023, the current food price crisis could develop into a food availability crisis if we don't act."</p> <p>The Security Council was focusing on conflict-induced food insecurity and the risk of famine in Ethiopia, northeastern Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen. But Beasley and U.N. humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths also warned about the food crisis in Somalia, which they both recently visited, and Griffiths also put Afghanistan high on the list.</p> <p>"Famine will happen in Somalia," Griffiths said, and "be sure it won't be the only place either."</p>

He cited recent assessments that identified “hundreds of thousands of people facing catastrophic levels of hunger,” meaning they are at the worst “famine” level.

Beasley recalled his warning to the council in April 2020 “that we were then facing famine, starvation of biblical proportions.” He said then the world “stepped up with funding and tremendous response, and we averted catastrophe.”

“We are on the edge once again, even worse, and we must do all that we can — all hands on deck with every fiber of our bodies,” he said. “The hungry people of the world are counting on us, and ... we must not let them down.”

Griffiths said the widespread and increasing food insecurity is a result of the direct and indirect impact of conflict and violence that kills and injures civilians, forces families to flee the land they depend on for income and food, and leads to economic decline and rising prices for food that they can’t afford.

After more than seven years of war In Yemen, he said, “some 19 million people — six out of 10 — are acutely food insecure, an estimated 160,000 people are facing catastrophe, and 538,000 children are severely malnourished.”

Beasley said the Ukraine war is stoking inflation in Yemen, which is 90% reliant on food imports. The World Food Program hopes to provide aid to about 18 million people, but its costs have risen 30% this year to \$2.6 billion. As a result, it has been forced to cut back, so Yemenis this month are getting only two-thirds of their previous rations, he said.

Beasley said South Sudan faces “its highest rate of acute hunger since its independence in 2011” from Sudan. He said 7.7 million people, over 60% of the population, are “facing critical or worse levels of food insecurity.” Without a political solution to escalating violence and substantial spending on aid programs, “many people in South Sudan will die,” he warned.

In northern Ethiopia’s Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions, more than 13 million people need life-saving food, Griffiths said. He pointed to a survey in Tigray in June that found 89% of people food insecure, “more than half of them severely so.” Beasley said a truce in March enabled WFP and its partners to reach almost 5 million people in the Tigray area, but resumed fighting in recent weeks “threatens to push many hungry, exhausted families over the edge.”

In northeast Nigeria, the U.N. projects that 4.1 million people are facing high levels of food insecurity, including 588,000 who faced emergency levels between June and August, Griffiths said. He said almost half of those people couldn’t be reached because of insecurity, and the U.N. fears “some people may already be at the level of catastrophe and already dying.”

Griffiths urged the Security Council to “leave no stone unturned” in trying to end these conflicts, and to step up financing for humanitarian operations, saying U.N. appeals in those four countries are all “well below half of the required funding.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Tropical storm watches: Fiona strengthens
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.accuweather.com/en/hurricane/puerto-rico-us-virgin-islands-on-alert-as-fiona-strengthens/1246744">https://www.accuweather.com/en/hurricane/puerto-rico-us-virgin-islands-on-alert-as-fiona-strengthens/1246744</a>
GIST	Tropical storm watches were put into effect for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands late Thursday afternoon, adding to a slew of warnings and watches that were already in effect. Fiona strengthened marginally on Thursday with its sustained winds at 60 mph and gusts even higher, the National Hurricane Center (NHC) said after hurricane hunters returned from a mission to investigate the storm.

As of 11 p.m. Thursday, [Fiona](#) was located about 335 miles east-southeast of the Leeward Islands and heading westward at a speed of 15 mph. Tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 140 miles, the NHC said.

Tropical Storm Fiona developed east of the Leeward Islands late Wednesday evening, according to the NHC. [AccuWeather](#) forecasters had been watching a disturbance in the area this week due to its potential for development, and on Wednesday, the system became more organized.

Tropical storm watches were upgraded to warnings in parts of the Leeward Islands Thursday. The government of Antigua and Barbuda issued the warnings for Antigua, Barbuda, St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, and Anguilla, the NHC said. Elsewhere, the Netherlands government issued a warning for the islands of Saba and St. Eustatius, while the government of St. Maarten declared a warning as well.

The French government declared a tropical storm watch for the islands of Guadeloupe, St. Barthelemy, and St. Martin.

Tropical storm watches were issued for the British Virgin Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, including Vieques and Culebra, Thursday evening.

Fiona became the sixth named storm of the 2022 Atlantic hurricane season on Wednesday night, about 12 hours after it was labeled as a tropical depression.

"There will be a brief window, into Friday, where Fiona may gain some more strength as a tropical storm, despite disruptive [wind shear](#)," AccuWeather Meteorologist Rob Richards said, "But, beyond Friday, interaction with the progressively larger islands and taller mountains over the northern Caribbean will likely lead to weakening or at least cause strengthening to cease."

There are some pockets of dry air in Fiona's path, but it is much less than the dry conditions farther east in the Atlantic basin.

Tropical Storm Fiona is forecast to move generally westward through Saturday which will take the storm across the northern islands of the Caribbean. The outer bands of the tropical system are likely to reach the Leeward Islands on Friday morning.

The most widespread impact of this tropical system will be drenching downpours. Rainfall amounts of 2-4 inches could bring localized flooding from the islands of Guadeloupe and Antigua, through the British and U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico to the Dominican Republic.

As Fiona strengthens further, wind gusts will increase up to 60 mph across the same islands.

Due to the risk that the rain and wind pose across the region, this storm has been rated as less than one on the AccuWeather RealImpact™ Scale for Hurricanes.

The fate of Tropical Storm Fiona after Friday will be heavily dictated by the environment that the tropical feature will be moving into over the central Caribbean islands.

"There is a plethora of strong wind shear across the Caribbean islands. This combined, with the friction of the tropical system passing over the mountainous islands, is expected to help the system lose wind intensity over the weekend," AccuWeather Senior Meteorologist Adam Douty said.

Even with lesser wind speeds, Fiona could still be impactful to Puerto Rico, Hispaniola, eastern Cuba and the southern Bahamas. Heavy, tropical rainfall and gusty winds will be the most likely impacts to land, along with rough seas in nearby waters.

AccuWeather forecasters expect the tropical feature to take a turn more to the north once it reaches the Bahamas due to strong wind shear in the Gulf of Mexico and nearby steering winds. As such, initial

indications are that the feature could miss the United States. However, since any direct interaction from Fiona in the U.S. is more than a week away, it is possible that weather patterns may shift. For this reason, interests along the East Coast of the U.S. and Bermuda should continue to monitor Fiona's progress.

Even without an organized storm forecast to impact the eastern U.S. in the coming week, tropical moisture is still expected to play a role in weather conditions taking shape across parts of the country this week.

"A front will stall along the Gulf Coast, helping to produce thunderstorms across the Florida Peninsula. A flow of tropical moisture from the Caribbean and Gulf toward this front will further enhance thunderstorms with heavy rain," Douty said.

Drenching thunderstorms for the second half of the week could quickly bring as much as 1-2 inches of rain in a short amount of time. While the soil across much of Florida is equipped to handle heavier-than-normal downpours, in more developed or paved locations, such as cities, water could start ponding, especially in low-lying areas.

AccuWeather forecasters say that motorists should be particularly alert for heavy downpours that could bring reduced visibility and associated travel delays.

Depending on the tropical system's track and should any of the tropical moisture from the rainstorm survive the strong winds of the Caribbean, there could be another round of tropical downpours in parts of Florida next week. A second dose of heavy rain in just a few days could bring an increased risk for flooding.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Russia rare nod to China on 'concerns'
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/15/putin-thanks-xi-china-balanced-stance-on-ukraine-invasion-russia">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/15/putin-thanks-xi-china-balanced-stance-on-ukraine-invasion-russia</a>
GIST	<p>Vladimir Putin has told Xi Jinping that he understands China's "questions and concerns" about the war in Ukraine, in a rare nod to tensions between the two states caused by the Russian invasion.</p> <p>The remarks came as Xi and Putin met on Thursday for the first time since the war began, at a summit in Uzbekistan where the Russian president was expected to court the Chinese leader personally as an ally in his conflict with the west.</p> <p>The two leaders exchanged warm words in their opening remarks, with Xi calling Putin an "old friend" and Putin thanking the Chinese leader for his "balanced" stance on the Ukraine invasion.</p> <p>But it was Putin's cryptic acknowledgment of Chinese "concerns" over the invasion that drew the most attention. In doing so, the Russian leader seemed especially keen to curry favour with Xi, striking a conciliatory tone on a topic where he is often volatile and uncompromising.</p> <p>"We highly value the balanced position of our Chinese friends when it comes to the Ukraine crisis," Putin said. "We understand your questions and concerns about this. During today's meeting, we will of course explain our position."</p> <p>China's concerns are probably headed by the economic fallout from the invasion, including Russian threats of an all-out energy war against Europe. While Putin and Xi had announced "no limits" in their partnership at a summit in February before the war began, China has avoided voicing public support for the invasion or of providing military or economic aid that could incur secondary sanctions.</p> <p>As Russia faces setbacks on the battlefield and growing costs to its economy from sanctions, Putin may have sought to take advantage of the rare personal meeting to secure an economic and diplomatic lifeline. The sit-down was at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, Xi's first international trip since the pandemic began.</p>



During the meeting, the two bonded over their mutual dislike of Washington, with Putin accusing the US of launching a “provocation” in the Taiwan strait. He reiterated support for the “one China” policy, which denies Taiwan’s sovereignty

Xi reciprocated, saying China was “willing to work with Russia to demonstrate the responsibility of big powers” and to “instil stability and positive energy in a world of chaos”.

Putin explicitly backed China over Taiwan, which Beijing claims is a Chinese province it will retake by force if necessary.

China held blockade-style military drills around Taiwan after the US House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, visited the island last month. Taiwan’s government strongly rejects China’s sovereignty claims.

“We intend to firmly adhere to the principle of ‘one China’,” Putin said. “We condemn provocations by the United States and their satellites in the Taiwan strait.”

Fifteen heads of state were expected to gather at the SCO summit, with much of the western media focus on Xi and Putin.

The pair announced a limitless partnership in February after meeting on the sidelines of the Beijing Winter Olympics. Just weeks later Russia invaded Ukraine. China’s government has struggled to balance its partnership with the global condemnation of Russia and the breadth of sanctions levelled against Moscow in response. It has at various times presented itself as a neutral party, even a potential mediator, but signs of support for Russia have grown clearer.

This week Li Zhanshu, China’s third highest-ranking official, met Russian lawmakers and told them China “fully understands and supports” Russia’s core interests and concerns. He explicitly blamed the US and Nato for the Ukraine conflict – a stance it has held since the early days of the invasion – but added that China understood and supported the fact that Russia “took the action that should be taken”, according to a translation by a China monitoring group, the Great Translation Movement.

Behind the close Xi-Putin relationship, however, analysts have said the summit would probably see them jostling for influence in central Asia. The Ukraine war and recent battlefield losses have weakened Russia’s position as a security guarantor in the region, they said, but it remained to be seen if China would step into the role.

Rather, Xi would probably be seeking to take advantage of China’s rising power to build on trade routes through central Asia, future-proof the country against sanctions if it attacks Taiwan, and secure support in defending its policies in Xinjiang. China has been accused of crimes against humanity in the region, which borders Kazakhstan, but it denies wrongdoing.

“In historical terms, China has been at its strongest whenever the global trade system is land based, not sea based,” said Niva Yau, a senior researcher at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, prior to the summit. “Whenever we see that China has major issue with Taiwan, we see China pivoting to central Asia.”

Prior to the summit commencing, Xi travelled to Kazakhstan and met the president, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, a key figure in Xi’s regional goals. On Thursday morning he also met Turkmenistan’s president, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, the Kyrgyz president, Sadyr Zhaparov, the Tajik president Emomali Rahmon, and he was greeted on arrival by the Uzbek president, Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

According to Chinese official readouts of the meetings, Xi frequently emphasised mutual national sovereignty and decrying “external interference” – an accusation Beijing often throws at western nations critical of China’s domestic or international behaviour.

	<p>The statements also noted a push for greater bilateral agreements on trade routes and infrastructure investments, including under the belt and road initiative launched by Xi in Kazakhstan in 2013, as well as resource deals.</p> <p>Analysts said Kazakhstan was a key target in the region for China, with a relatively new president who came to power two years ago, after his predecessor ruled for almost three decades. The timing of the SCO summit and China's need for central Asian influence left Kazakhstan in a "privileged position to bargain" with Beijing.</p> <p>"In every single one of these deals with China they are getting more than what other countries would get," said Yau.</p> <p>An itinerary released by India's delegation said its prime minister, Narendra Modi, would meet Putin, but Xi is not expected to meet Modi as the two governments struggle to negotiate bilateral disputes including the withdrawal of military troops from disputed border areas.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

## Cyber, Tech Awareness

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 Crypto scams soar, domains surge 335%</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/crypto-scams-soar-as-domains-surge/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/crypto-scams-soar-as-domains-surge/</a>
GIST	<p>Cryptocurrency scams are set to explode after researchers detected a triple-digit increase in registered domains in the first half of 2022, compared to the whole of last year.</p> <p><a href="#">Group-IB</a> said it had detected over 2000 domains registered to be used as fake promotion websites in the first half of this year. That's a 335% increase on the number recorded in 2021, a five-fold increase compared to the second half of 2021 and a 53-fold rise in comparison with H1 2021.</p> <p>Although most of the fake sites target English and Spanish language speakers, 63% were registered with Russian registrars, <a href="#">the vendor claimed</a>.</p> <p>Victims are lured to these sites via fraudulent YouTube streams featuring popular figures like Elon Musk, Brad Garlinghouse, footballer Cristiano Ronaldo and even El Salvador president, Nayib Bukele.</p> <p>They all have a connection to crypto. Ronaldo recently signed a partnership with Binance, while El Salvador became the first country to adopt bitcoin as its national currency.</p> <p>"The scammers used the footage of famous entrepreneurs and crypto enthusiasts to encourage users to visit a promotional website to double their crypto investment — by transferring crypto to the specified address or disclosing the seed phrase of their crypto wallet to receive even better terms," Group-IB said.</p> <p>The YouTube accounts used in the scams are either hijacked using dedicated stealer tools or bought/rented on underground forums in return for a percentage of the stolen funds.</p> <p>"Scams targeting crypto-enthusiasts are becoming increasingly common, and their scope and sophistication are growing," said Group-IB.</p> <p>"Crypto-giveaway scams have evolved into a profitable illicit market segment. Small-time scammers and more advanced cyber-criminals band together, allowing them to automate and streamline operations."</p> <p>Back in April, <a href="#">the same security vendor revealed</a> that one group of fraudsters managed to make nearly \$1.7m in just three days after luring victims to visit fake sites via 36 YouTube streams.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	09/15 Hive claims Bell Canada subsidiary attack
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/hive-ransomware-claims-cyberattack-on-bell-canada-subsidiary/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/hive-ransomware-claims-cyberattack-on-bell-canada-subsidiary/</a>
GIST	<p>The Hive ransomware gang claimed responsibility for an attack that hit the systems of Bell Canada subsidiary Bell Technical Solutions (BTS).</p> <p>BTS is an independent subsidiary with more than 4,500 employees, specializing in installing Bell services for residential and small business customers across the Ontario and Québec provinces.</p> <p>While the Canadian telecommunications company didn't reveal when its network was breached or the attack happened, Hive claims in a new entry added to its data leak blog that it encrypted BTS' systems almost a month ago, on August 20, 2022.</p> <p>BTS' website, usually reachable at <a href="https://bellsolutionstech.ca">bellsolutionstech.ca</a>, is currently inaccessible, however, Bell Canada published a cybersecurity alert following the incident on its own website.</p> <p>"We became aware that some operational company and employee information was accessed in a recent cybersecurity incident targeted at Bell Technical Solutions," Bell <a href="#">said</a>.</p> <p>"The unauthorized party accessed information that may include the name, address and phone number of residential and small business customers in Ontario and Québec who booked a technician visit.</p> <p>"Bell Technical Solutions took immediate steps to secure affected systems and we want to assure you that no database containing customer information such as credit and debit card numbers, banking or other financial data was accessed in the incident."</p> <p>BTS is currently investigating the incident with the help of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's cybercrime unit and has notified the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of the breach.</p> <p>The Bell subsidiary warned customers of the possibility of being targeted in phishing attacks following this incident and advised them to monitor their accounts for any suspicious activity.</p> <p>"We will directly notify any individuals whose private information may have been accessed. Bell Technical Solutions operates independently from Bell on a separate IT system; other Bell customers or other Bell subsidiaries were not impacted," the company added.</p> <p>"We are pursuing our investigation and working with third-party cybersecurity experts on the matter, as well as implementing solutions to further enhance the security of our systems."</p> <p><a href="#">Hive</a> is a Ransomware-as-a-Service (RaaS) operation active since <a href="#">June 2021</a> behind attacks against dozens of organizations, counting only those victims who had their data leaked online after refusing to pay the ransom,</p> <p>The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) released some indicators of compromise and <a href="#">technical details associated with Hive ransomware attacks</a> in August 2021.</p> <p>Like many other ransomware gangs that use double extortion, the FBI said that Hive operators would also steal any files they consider valuable before encryption to pressure their victim to pay the ransom under the threat of a data leak.</p> <p>Due to an ongoing investigation, Bell Senior Communications Manager Jacqueline Michelis didn't provide more details when asked to confirm Hive's claims.</p>

	The shared statement rehashed the main points of the alert, saying that the compromised servers contained "operational company and employee information" and that no customer financial data was accessed during the incident.
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 Fake cryptocurrency giveaway sites spike</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/fake-cryptocurrency-giveaway-sites-have-tripled-this-year/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/fake-cryptocurrency-giveaway-sites-have-tripled-this-year/</a>
GIST	<p>The number of websites promoting cryptocurrency giveaway scams to lure gullible victims has increased by more than 300% in the first half of this year, targeting mostly English and Spanish speakers using celebrity deepfakes.</p> <p>Security researchers at cybersecurity company Group-IB have identified more than 2,000 domains registered in 2022 specifically for this purpose.</p> <p>A report published today notes that the amount of fake giveaways involving cryptocurrency have increased five times compared to the same period last year.</p> <p>Each of these sites has an average reach of about 15,000 viewers. If this data is accurate, scammers have a targeting pool of about 30 million people. The use of top-level domains (TLDs) that are considered more trustworthy (".COM", ".NET"), and ".ORG") have also contributed to this success.</p> <p>Group-IB says that scammers abuse several video platforms to promote the fake giveaways in live streams with deepfakes of Elon Musk, Garlinghouse, Michael J. Saylor, and Cathie Wood. YouTube is first on the list, followed by Twitch.</p> <p>The promotional streams come from accounts that have been hijacked or rented from underground hackers who receive between 10% and 50% of the earnings, depending on the size of the channel.</p> <p>The more subscribers the channel has, the harder it is to block the stream, as it would take a higher number of reports to trigger YouTube's moderation system.</p> <p>Additionally, the scammers have set up campaigns using the image of El Salvador's president, Nayib Bukele, who has declared Bitcoin a legal tender in the country, or soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo who signed an exclusive partnership with Binance this summer.</p> <p>This shows that scammers are quick to adjust to new developments in the field and take advantage of the current context to promote realistic scams.</p> <p><b>Scams are easier to set up</b></p> <p>Group-IB explains that the primary reason behind the sudden surge of cryptocurrency scams this year is the significant rise in the broader availability of tools that help in their making.</p> <p>"The phenomenal growth of fake crypto giveaways can be explained by a significantly enhanced arsenal and availability of tools for crypto scammers, even with low technical skills," explains the cyber-intelligence firm.</p> <p>"Group-IB revealed that forums used by scammers make up a full-fledged marketplace that can help even first-time non-tech-savvy scammers carry out a crypto fraud scheme," the researchers say.</p> <p>Russian-speaking forums today offer a dedicated market for hacked YouTube accounts, viewer boosting services, detailed tutorials on how to set up scams, drag-and-drop website creating platforms, bulletproof hosting services, and deepfake creation tools.</p> <p>Moreover, these forums are stamping grounds for scam mentors, fake giveaway promotion specialists, and various service contractors, so the fraudsters don't need any knowledge to run these campaigns.</p>

	<p>Group-IB says a complete crypto stream design costs around \$200, while the production of a celebrity deepfake video would set the crooks back around \$30.</p> <p>Fake giveaway landing pages cost between \$200 and \$600, manuals are sold for around \$100, and fully automated toolkits range between \$500 and \$1,500 per month.</p> <p>"Scams targeting crypto enthusiasts are becoming increasingly common, and their scope and sophistication are growing. Crypto giveaway scams have evolved into a profitable illicit market segment. Small-time scammers and more advanced cybercriminals band together, allowing them to automate and streamline operations." - Group IB</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Malware on pirated content sites major risk</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/malware-pirated-content-sites-major-wfh-risk-enterprises">https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/malware-pirated-content-sites-major-wfh-risk-enterprises</a>
GIST	<p>The conventional wisdom about there being no such thing as a free lunch appears to be especially true for those visiting websites offering "free" (read: pirated) movies, TV shows, and other entertainment content.</p> <p>A joint investigation by the consumer-oriented Digital Citizens Alliance, piracy and brand protection firm White Bullet, and security firm 221B found that most pirate sites generate a substantial portion of their revenues from serving malware-infused ads on the systems of users who visit them.</p> <p>Many of the advertisers use fear tactics — of a malware infection, for instance — or messages conveying the need for a user to update their antivirus or other software, to try and deceive users into clicking on a malicious ad. The ads are often served as pop-ups or in so-called pop-under fashion behind a browser window. Users who click on the advertisements can often end up downloading ransomware, spyware for tracking their activities, and malware for stealing banking credentials or for bookmarking their compromised system for a future attack.</p> <p><b>Not Just a Consumer-Oriented Threat</b></p> <p>The threat might appear primarily consumer-oriented on the surface, but in an era in which many employees are working from home — often using unmanaged devices and poorly secured networks — what happens on a consumer device can easily spill over into enterprise environments as well.</p> <p>"The report's findings show that deceptive ads on piracy sites are driving the spread of malware, including ransomware attacks," says Tom Galvin, executive director of Digital Citizens Alliance. That should be a matter of concern to enterprises that have workers splitting their time between an office and home, he notes.</p> <p>For such workers, the division between when they are working or playing is increasingly blurred, Galvin says.</p> <p>"Given that the ads on piracy websites condition visitors to change their device settings to get access to what they want, that poses risks to enterprises," he says. "Workers visiting a piracy website could end up with their device breached, exposing the company to ransomware attacks or risk exposure to confidential information."</p> <p>The collaborative investigation by Digital Citizens Alliance, White Bullet, and 221B showed that on average, 12% of the ads on websites serving pirated entertainment are malicious ads that <a href="#">generate a minimum of \$121 million annually</a> in revenues for the site operator.</p> <p>More than half of those revenues, or some \$68 million, come from malicious advertisements served to US-based visitors to these sites. The research showed that the top websites that offer pirated and stolen content are raking in \$1.08 billion in annual ad revenues.</p>

### **Pirating & Malware: A Willing Alliance**

In many instances, the researchers found ad intermediaries actively facilitating ad placement on pirated sites even though they knew the advertisements were weaponized with different kinds of malware.

The new investigation showed that sites offering pirated content can sometimes profit from legitimate ads on their sites, but instances of ads for reputable companies landing on pirate sites are decreasing because of initiatives that the ad industry has launched in recent years.

One of the most significant efforts to reduce revenues from legitimate ads for pirate site owners is being spearheaded by a group called the Trustworthy Accountability Group, according to the joint report: "As those efforts have succeeded in reducing revenue from legitimate advertisers, pirate operators appear to be increasingly turning to malvertising facilitated by the bottom feeders of the advertising ecosystem," the report noted.

Pop-under ads, through which malicious activity is hidden under content that a user might expect to see, are particularly lucrative for piracy site operators. These ads accounted for \$88 million of the average \$121 million in revenues the site operators generate. Click-to-play ads, where users are tricked into clicking on something to stream content, is another favorite tactic and accounts for \$21 millions in revenues.

### **Cyber-Risks With the New Normal**

The new normal of people working from home has created a target-rich environment for criminals seeking to breach computers, Galvin says. "They may be a consumer one minute and working on behalf of their organization the next," he says. Piracy and specifically many of malicious ads that appear on the sites are crafted to trick users to taking steps that lead to their devices being infected.

"Once that happens, it doesn't matter. Whatever information is on that device is the target of these illicit actors," he warns. "This should be a concern for corporations, nonprofit organizations, and governments that face the growing threat of cyberattack."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 China revamps aging malware for attacks
SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/hackers-use-aging-malware-to-attack-government-agencies-it-firms-in-multiple-asian-countries/">https://therecord.media/hackers-use-aging-malware-to-attack-government-agencies-it-firms-in-multiple-asian-countries/</a>
GIST	<p>Hackers connected to the Chinese military are trying to revamp aging malware in espionage attacks on an IT service provider operating in multiple Asian countries as well as government agencies and enterprises involved in IT services, aerospace, and electric power industries located in Russia, Georgia, Mongolia, according to researchers from Symantec.</p> <p>Cybersecurity experts from the company <a href="#">said</a> they recently observed three customized versions of older remote access Trojans (RATs) — Trochilus, Gh0st RAT, and 9002 RAT — used in an attack on an Asian IT service provider.</p> <p>The group behind the most recent attack is called Webworm, according to Symantec, which found that the group was previously referred to as “Space Pirates” <a href="#">in a May 2022 report</a> from <a href="#">Russian cybersecurity firm</a> Positive Technologies.</p> <p>The group has been active since at least 2017 and typically uses “custom loaders” hidden behind decoy documents and modified backdoors.</p> <p>Dick O’Brien, principal intelligence analyst for the Symantec Threat Hunter team, explained to The Record that it is interesting to see groups using such a wide range of payloads during attacks in recent months.</p> <p>“Previously you may have seen them use just one or two main tools, but now it can be a whole array of malware, often with similar functionality,” O’Brien said. “It suggests that attackers are trying to keep their</p>



options open and have a fallback at hand lest one tool is detected. That, combined with the fact that we're finding evidence of constant tweaking and testing, suggests that attackers have a harder time getting their malware onto targeted networks without being detected."

The Trochilus RAT was first used in 2015 by multiple groups as a way to evade detection and was previously linked to operations from threat actors also using malware such as PlugX — a tool [used by a wide-range of Chinese government-connected hacking groups](#).

9002 RAT has existed since 2009 and was historically used by state-sponsored actors, providing attackers with extensive data exfiltration capabilities.

"The malware has been used in multiple campaigns by a range of actors, including in a hacking operation targeting several large corporations located in South Korea. The RAT was used to deliver additional malware, including the PlugX RAT, onto compromised machines," the researchers said.

"It has also been involved in attacks making use of zero-day exploits."

The Gh0st RAT is similarly old, with its first debut taking place around 2008. It has been used by a range of advanced persistent threat (APT) groups in attacks on diplomatic, political, economic, and military targets around the world.

In the latest campaign, code modifications were made to each, with a focus on evading detection.

Part of what makes attribution difficult in this case is that several groups across Asia exchange tools intentionally as a way to obscure the traces of distinct threat groups, the researchers said.

Webworm's use of customized versions of older, and in some cases open-source, malware, as well as code is also likely related to cost, as developing sophisticated malware can be expensive in terms of both money and time.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 RedLine stealer targets YouTube users</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/youtube-users-targeted-by-redline/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/youtube-users-targeted-by-redline/</a>
GIST	<p>Threat actors have conducted a campaign relying on the RedLine stealer and targeting YouTube users.</p> <p>The news comes from cybersecurity researchers at <a href="#">Kaspersky</a>, who published an advisory about the campaign earlier today.</p> <p>"Discovered in March 2020, RedLine is currently one of the most common Trojans used to steal passwords and credentials from browsers, FTP clients and desktop messengers," wrote Oleg Kupreev in the technical write-up.</p> <p>"It is openly available on underground hacker forums for just a few hundred dollars, a relatively small price tag for malware."</p> <p>According to the security expert, RedLine can steal usernames, passwords, cookies, bank card details and autofill data from Chromium- and Gecko-based browsers. It is also capable of obtaining data from crypto wallets, instant messengers and FTP/SSH/VPN clients and files with particular extensions from devices.</p> <p>The malware can reportedly download and run third-party software tools, execute commands in cmd.exe and open links via the default browser.</p> <p>"The stealer spreads in various ways, including through malicious spam e-mails and third-party loaders," Kupreev explained.</p>

Further, in addition to the payload itself, Kaspersky noticed that the discovered bundle had self-propagation functionalities.

“Several files are responsible for this, which receive videos and post them to the infected users’ YouTube channels along with the links to a password-protected archive with the bundle in the description,” the [advisory](#) reads.

“The videos advertise cheats and cracks and provide instructions on hacking popular games and software.”

From a technical standpoint, the bundle is a self-extracting RAR archive containing several malicious files, clean utilities and a script programmed to automatically run the unpacked contents.

Kaspersky said that the self-spreading bundle with RedLine is a prime example of stealer-type malware being distributed under the guise of game hacks.

“Cyber-criminals lure victims with ads for cracks and cheats, as well as instructions on how to hack games,” Kupreev said.

“At the same time, the self-propagation functionality is implemented using relatively unsophisticated software, such as a customized open-source stealer. All this is further proof if any were needed, that illegal software should be treated with extreme caution.”

The Kaspersky advisory comes days after a report by cybersecurity firm Akamai suggested cyber-attacks in the gaming sector [have increased by 167%](#) in the last year.

As for the RedLine stealer, the tool was also spotted [in a ModernLoader campaign](#) uncovered by Cisco Talos last month.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Gamaredon APT targets Ukraine govt.</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://blog.talosintelligence.com/2022/09/gamaredon-apt-targets-ukrainian-agencies.html?&amp;web_view=true">https://blog.talosintelligence.com/2022/09/gamaredon-apt-targets-ukrainian-agencies.html?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cisco Talos recently identified a new, ongoing campaign attributed to the Russia-linked <a href="#">Gamaredon</a> APT that infects Ukrainian users with information-stealing malware.</li><li>• The adversary is using phishing documents containing lures related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.</li><li>• LNK files, PowerShell and VBScript enable initial access, while malicious binaries are deployed in the post-infection phase.</li><li>• We discovered the use of a custom-made information stealer implant that can exfiltrate victim files of interest and deploy additional payloads as directed by the attackers.</li></ul> <p>Cisco Talos discovered <a href="#">Gamaredon</a> APT activity targeting users in Ukraine with malicious LNK files distributed in RAR archives. The campaign, part of an ongoing espionage operation observed as recently as August 2022, aims to deliver information-stealing malware to Ukrainian victim machines and makes heavy use of multiple modular PowerShell and VBScript (VBS) scripts as part of the infection chain. The infostealer is a dual-purpose malware that includes capabilities for exfiltrating specific file types and deploying additional binary and script-based payloads on an infected endpoint.</p> <p>The adversary uses phishing emails to deliver Microsoft Office documents containing remote templates with malicious VBScript macros. These macros download and open RAR archives containing LNK files that subsequently download and activate the next-stage payload on the infected endpoint. We observed considerable overlap between the tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), malware artifacts and infrastructure used in this campaign and those used in a <a href="#">series</a> of attacks the Ukraine Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-UA) <a href="#">recently attributed to Gamaredon</a>.</p> <p>We also observed intrusion attempts against several Ukrainian entities. Based on these observations and</p>

	<p>Gamaredon's operational history of almost exclusively targeting Ukraine, we assess that this latest campaign is almost certainly directly targeting entities based in Ukraine.</p> <p>Gamaredon APT actors likely gained initial footholds into targeted networks through malicious Microsoft Office documents distributed via email. This is consistent with spear-phishing techniques common to this APT.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 DC top city for remote work in 2021</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-vb/2022/09/15/dc-work-from-home-census/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-vb/2022/09/15/dc-work-from-home-census/</a>
GIST	<p>The portion of people working primarily from home in Washington, D.C., last year was the highest of any large city in the nation, with nearly half of workers 16 and older working remotely, about seven times more than before the pandemic.</p> <p>The numbers were up everywhere, with nearly 18 percent of people across the United States working from home last year, three times the portion who were just before the pandemic, according to Census Bureau data released Thursday. But in many large urban and suburban jurisdictions the share was much higher, reflecting a massive shift in how Americans work and coming as many companies try to woo, coerce or threaten employees into returning to the office.</p> <p>In the District, 48.3 percent of employees worked remotely in 2021, compared with around 6 or 7 percent between 2017 and 2019. Second on the list of the biggest 50 cities was Seattle (46.8 percent), followed by San Francisco (45.6 percent), Austin (38.8 percent) and Atlanta (38.7 percent).</p> <p>Among metro areas over 1 million in population, the Washington, D.C., region ranked third in remote work, at 33.1 percent, just below the San Francisco and San Jose metro areas (35.1 percent and 34.8 percent, respectively).</p> <p>The data came from the 2021 American Community Survey, which provides annual estimates based on questionnaires filled out by 3.5 million households. Last year marked the highest number and percentage of people working from home recorded since the ACS began in 2005, the bureau said.</p> <p>Of the five top large counties for working from home, three were in the Washington metro area, with the District in the top slot and Fairfax and Montgomery counties fourth and fifth, at 37.2 and 37.1 percent, respectively.</p> <p>All the top-ranked cities, counties and metro areas saw radical increases compared with before the pandemic, when the portion of people working from home in those places was between around 5 and 10 percent.</p> <p>Between 2019 and 2021, the number of people working from home tripled from 5.7 percent (around 9 million people) to 17.9 percent (27.6 million people), according to the new data. States with the highest percentage of home-based workers were Washington (24.2 percent), Maryland (24.0 percent), Colorado (23.7 percent) and Massachusetts (also 23.7 percent).</p> <p>The percentage of people working from home correlates strongly with the portion of workers who are college graduates, according to an analysis that William Frey, a demographer with the Brookings Institution, did for The Washington Post. According to the new census data, 63 percent of people 25 and older in the District have a bachelor's degree or higher, making it the second-most-highly-educated city after Seattle, at 68.3 percent.</p> <p>That number reflects a continuing increase in the District's college-educated population in recent years; in 2016 it was 56.8 percent, up from 45.9 percent in 2006 and 33.3 percent in 1990. (Nationwide, 35 percent of people 25 and older have a bachelor's degree or higher, up from 33.1 percent in 2019.) The next three most highly-educated cities in the country are San Francisco, Austin and Atlanta, correlating with the highest remote-work cities.</p>

“These are by and large magnets for younger, well-educated, computer-savvy adults often tied to the tech industry who are well positioned to work from home,” Frey said.

The share of people with college degrees varies widely by race in the District, where 93 percent of White people are college graduates, by far the highest portion for a large city (Atlanta and San Francisco are second and third, at 80.4 and 79.5 percent, respectively). Among Black residents the portion drops to 33.7 percent (seventh among the 50 biggest U.S. cities); among Hispanics it is 57.4 percent (first among the biggest cities); and among Asians it is 79.9 percent (second after Atlanta).

More than a quarter of Black people in the District, 27.7 percent, live below the poverty line, compared with 5.1 percent of Whites, 10.5 percent of Hispanics and 16.1 percent of Asians, according to the new data; the overall rate for the city is 16.5 percent, 4 or 5 percentage points higher than just before the pandemic but slightly lower than the 2000s and much of the 2010s, when it ranged between about 17 and 20 percent. (Nationwide, the portions are 9.5 percent for Whites, 21.8 percent for Blacks, 17.5 percent for Hispanics and 10.2 percent for Asians.)

The unusual circumstances of the pandemic created hardship offset by significant federal investment for low-income people in the city, said Erica Williams, executive director of the DC Fiscal Policy Institute. Even as people lost income because of pandemic restrictions and illness, federal aid programs such as the child tax credit “absolutely made a difference. Things could have been much, much worse without those massive investments,” she said, adding that the credit had cut child poverty in half in the District.

A report this week from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities found that “due chiefly to the Child Tax Credit, child poverty fell sharply in 2021 and reached a record low of 5.2 percent” nationwide. That credit ended this year.

Black median household income in the District is \$52,812, well below the city overall, at \$90,088; for Whites in the District it is \$145,975. Unemployment among Black residents in the District was up slightly in the first quarter of 2022 compared with a year earlier, and is more than seven times that of White workers, Williams said. “So even in this moment of recovery, there are obviously a lot of barriers to work ... that Black folks face in the District that they don’t face in other areas.”

For example, the city has “a lot of high-paying jobs that require certain skills and education that a lot of Black workers in the District don’t get access to or haven’t received,” she said.

In the greater Washington metropolitan region, the portion of Black people living in poverty is 13.2 percent, and Black people in the metro area have a median household income of \$81,696, putting it second among metro areas nationwide.

Many people who work in the city live outside it, Williams said, adding that nonresidents who work there have on average higher earnings than people who live and work in the city.

The new data also reflected a slowdown in the number of foreign-born people in the United States, with the past few years reflecting the smallest gains since the 1970s. Between 2011 and 2017, the country gained between 400,000 and 1.4 million foreign-born residents per year, but from 2018 to 2021, the gains fell to around 200,000 a year or lower, a result of more restrictive immigration policies under President Donald Trump along with the pandemic, Frey said.

“Given that our population growth is almost zero, something’s going to need to change,” he said. “That’s going to continue, and it’s not just a pandemic problem.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Tech firms to combat violent extremism
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/09/15/white-house-tech-extremism/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/09/15/white-house-tech-extremism/</a>

GIST	<p>The White House on Thursday announced that major companies would roll out a series of new policies and tools to combat the spread of extremism on their sites.</p> <p>Major social media services, including YouTube, Twitch, Microsoft and Facebook-parent Meta, announced their new initiatives to limit the spread of hateful rhetoric in coordination with a White House gathering on hate-fueled violence. The announcements follow mounting pressure on the companies to address the role their services play in amplifying hateful rhetoric, especially in the wake of mass shootings in <a href="#">Buffalo</a> and <a href="#">Uvalde, Tex.</a>, where the shooters had histories of violent rhetoric online.</p> <p>YouTube will update its policies to remove videos glorifying acts for the purpose of inspiring others or fundraising, even when the creators don't have links to terrorist groups. Twitch, an Amazon-owned streaming service, soon will roll out new tools to help its creators improve safety and limit harassment on their channels. And Microsoft will launch online safety education for students and families within its popular game Minecraft.</p> <p>Political pressure has been mounting on President Biden and Vice President Harris to follow through on their campaign pledges to more closely scrutinize the link between social media and violence. Biden is also expected to reiterate Thursday his calls to Congress to "fundamentally reform" Section 230, a legal shield that protects tech companies from lawsuits over the photos, videos and other content people share on their services. He also is expected to support creating transparency requirements that would allow researchers and the public to look under the hood of social media companies.</p> <p>Biden and Harris say the tech industry "must bear responsibility" for the role that their services play in amplifying violent extremist ideologies, according to a website for Thursday's summit.</p> <p>The flurry of announcements comes as tech companies are increasingly under the microscope for their role in spreading hatred and violence. The House committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol <a href="#">also has probed</a> social media companies and spoken to their current and former employees in an effort to determine the role tech played in the attack.</p> <p>However, Democrats' ability to pass new policies addressing these concerns is limited in the current Congress, where they hold a fragile majority with Harris's tiebreaking vote in the 50-50 Senate. Republicans have different criticisms of social media companies' content moderation practices, arguing that the companies take down too much content.</p> <p>In the absence of action from Congress, lawmakers and advocates have relied on public pressure to force businesses to change their policies on their own. The companies will additionally announce steps to expand public awareness about such ideologies and to better research extremism. YouTube will launch a campaign, initially in the United States, focused on helping young people identify manipulated information online. Meta will begin a partnership with the Middlebury Institute of International Studies' Center on Terrorism, Extremism and Counterterrorism to study new trends in extremism.</p> <p>Thursday's summit builds on other recent work in the White House. In June, Harris announced a new task force that would study and develop policy recommendations to <a href="#">address online abuse</a>.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Uber investigates network breach</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/sep/15/uber-computer-network-hack-report">https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/sep/15/uber-computer-network-hack-report</a>
GIST	<p>Uber said on Thursday it is responding to a cybersecurity incident, after the <a href="#">New York Times reported</a> that a hack had breached the company's network and forced it to take several internal communications and engineering systems offline.</p> <p>A hacker compromised an employee's workplace messaging Slack app and then used it to send a message to <a href="#">Uber</a> employees announcing that it had suffered a data breach, the Times reported citing an Uber spokesperson.</p>

	<p>It appeared the hacker was able to gain access to other internal company systems, posting an explicit photo on an internal information page for employees, the report added. “We are in touch with law enforcement and will post additional updates here as they become available,” Uber said in a tweet without providing further details.</p> <p>The Slack system was taken offline on Thursday afternoon by Uber after employees received the message from the hacker, according to the Times report, citing two employees who were not authorized to speak publicly.</p> <p>“I announce I am a hacker and Uber has suffered a data breach,” the message read, and went on to list several internal databases that were claimed to be compromised, the report added.</p> <p>Staff at the company was instructed to not use Slack, which is owned by Salesforce Inc, according to the report. Other internal systems, too, were reportedly inaccessible.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 EO blocks China investment in US tech</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/us/politics/biden-china-tech-executive-order.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/us/politics/biden-china-tech-executive-order.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — President Biden signed an executive order on Thursday designed to sharpen the federal government’s powers to block Chinese investment in technology in the United States and limit its access to private data on citizens, in a move that is bound to heighten tensions with Beijing.</p> <p>The new order is designed to focus the actions of the secretive Committee on Foreign Investments in the United States, created by Congress nearly a half-century ago. For years the committee’s powers were limited largely to blocking the foreign acquisition of American firms that might have a direct impact on national security — a military contractor, for example.</p> <p>But the most far-reaching part of Mr. Biden’s new order, and potentially the most important element in coming months, directs the committee to consider whether a pending deal involves the purchase of a business with access to Americans’ sensitive data, and whether a foreign company or government could exploit that information.</p> <p>That wording reflects growing unease about China’s ability to access the personal information that Americans hand over to mobile apps and other services. The committee, known by the acronym CFIUS, is believed to be already scrutinizing TikTok, the popular Chinese-owned video app that critics worry could expose its users’ data to the Chinese government.</p> <p>So far the Biden administration has said little about its review of TikTok. In the last months of the Trump administration, there was a hasty effort to force a sale of the American operations of TikTok to a consortium of American and other Western companies; it quickly fell apart. And the deal never resolved the broader question in the expanding technology wars between Washington and Beijing: How should the United States deal with the foreign apps that are becoming embedded on the screens of Americans’ smartphones, and thus in the daily fabric of American digital life?</p> <p>In recent months, evidence has emerged that TikTok employees in China had the ability to access data about Americans who signed up for the service. There is no public evidence the company has handed data over to the Chinese government, but Chinese national security laws could require the company to do so. The issue now is whether requiring the transfer of all that data to American-based servers would solve that problem, or merely mitigate it. And there are continuing questions about who designs the algorithms that track the interests and activities of Americans online.</p> <p>Chinese intelligence agencies have gone to great lengths to obtain vast troves of data about Americans, including by hacking the databases of the Office of Personnel Management during the Obama administration. Before American authorities caught on, the information that 22.5 million Americans had filed for security clearances was in Chinese hands. It has never been clear what China did with that data.</p>



The executive order, which has been anticipated for months, does not regulate “outbound investment” by American companies in foreign nations, though the Biden administration seems likely to seek new authority to regulate that as well. For years, one concern has been China’s requirement that foreign companies turn over technology as part of the price for being allowed to enter the Chinese market.

“For China, this work is about survival,” Nigel Inkster, the former director of operations and intelligence for Britain’s Secret Intelligence Service, wrote in The New York Times opinion section earlier this week, delineating covert operations by Chinese operatives to gain technology or manufacturing techniques that would speed Beijing’s way. He noted a law in China that orders Chinese citizens to help intelligence agencies, usually secretly.

The new order directs CFIUS to concentrate on specific types of transactions that would give a foreign power access to technologies that Mr. Biden has identified as critical to American economic growth. That includes “microelectronics, artificial intelligence, biotechnology and biomanufacturing, quantum computing, advanced clean energy and climate adaptation technologies,” according to a White House summary.

While China is not specifically mentioned in the order, all of those areas are part of the “Made in China 2025” drive started seven years ago by President Xi Jinping, and they are also technologies in which the United States is now investing more federal resources.

To some degree the presidential order formalizes a new, broader interpretation of the committee’s authority that has been underway for several years. White House officials say that they believe Mr. Biden’s order to focus CFIUS on certain technologies does not require amending its authorizing laws, which date back to the group’s creation during the Gerald Ford administration.

For most of its history, CFIUS only examined transactions in which a foreign firm sought to purchase a controlling interest in an American company that dealt in sensitive technologies. It blocked several such sales, often because it concluded that the firms provided weapons systems or products used by the intelligence agencies. (The Department of Defense and intelligence officials are members of the committee.) In other cases, American firms were required to divest themselves of a sensitive product or technology before the transaction could go through.

But over time it became obvious that a foreign firm did not need a majority share in a company in order to access key technologies. So over the past seven or so years, the power of the interagency group has expanded significantly, and it now has the power to block even a minority investment. That was driven, in part, out of fears that Chinese state-owned firms were setting up venture capital funds in Silicon Valley and beyond to get an early look at new technologies.

A White House statement said the new order would enshrine that approach, and look not at the size of the investment but at the characteristics of the technology itself, including “advancements and applications in technology that could undermine national security.”

The CFIUS members would not have to establish that a technology was currently vital to national security as long as it had that potential. For example, artificial intelligence software or quantum computers that would create strong encryption of data, or break that encryption, could trigger government action to keep the technology from the hands of Chinese or other competitors.

The order also authorizes the committee to block any deal that “erodes United States cybersecurity.” And it urges review of “incremental investments over time in a sector or technology” that could “cede, part-by-part, domestic development or control in that sector or technology.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 CBP copied massive American phone data
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/09/15/government-surveillance-database-dhs/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/09/15/government-surveillance-database-dhs/</a>

U.S. government officials are adding data from as many as 10,000 electronic devices each year to a massive database they've compiled from cellphones, iPads and computers seized from travelers at the country's airports, seaports and border crossings, leaders of Customs and Border Protection told congressional staff in a briefing this summer.

The rapid expansion of the database and the ability of 2,700 CBP officers to access it without a warrant — two details not previously known about the database — have raised alarms in Congress about what use the government has made of the information, much of which is captured from people not suspected of any crime. CBP officials told congressional staff the data is maintained for 15 years.

Details of the database were revealed Thursday in a letter to CBP Commissioner Chris Magnus from Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), who criticized the agency for “allowing indiscriminate rifling through Americans’ private records” and called for stronger privacy protections.

The revelations add new detail to what's known about the expanding ways that federal investigators use technology that many Americans may not understand or consent to.

Agents from the FBI and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, another Department of Homeland Security agency, have run [facial recognition searches](#) on [millions](#) of Americans’ driver’s license photos. They have tapped [private databases](#) of people’s financial and utility records to learn where they live. And they have [gleaned location data](#) from license-plate reader databases that can be used to track where people drive.

CBP’s inspection of people’s phones, laptops, tablets and other electronic devices as they enter the country has long been a controversial practice that the agency has defended as a low-impact way to pursue possible security threats and determine an individual’s “intentions upon entry” into the U.S. But the revelation that thousands of agents have access to a searchable database without public oversight is a new development in what privacy advocates and some lawmakers warn could be an infringement of Americans’ Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable searches and seizures.

CBP spokesman Lawrence “Rusty” Payne said in a statement Thursday that the agency conducts “border searches of electronic devices in accordance with statutory and regulatory authorities” and has imposed rules to ensure the searches are “exercised judiciously, responsibly, and consistent with the public trust.”

The database, known as the Automated Targeting System, is used “to further review, analyze, and assess information CBP obtained from electronic devices associated with individuals who are of a significant law enforcement, counterterrorism” or national security concern, he said.

CBP officials declined, however, to answer questions about how many Americans’ phone records are in the database, how many searches have been run or how long the practice has gone on, saying it has made no additional statistics available “due to law enforcement sensitivities and national security implications.”

A 2018 CBP directive establishing rules for the searches said officers should only retain information relating to immigration, customs or “other enforcement matters” unless they have probable cause that could justify saving more of the phones’ contents.

In the briefing this summer, however, CBP officials said their default configuration for some of the searches had been to download and retain all contact lists, call logs and messages, a Wyden aide said.

CBP officials retain people’s phone data in a very small fraction of searches and only when “absolutely necessary,” Aaron Bowker, CBP’s director of office of field operations, said in an interview Thursday.

CBP conducted roughly 37,000 searches of travelers’ devices in the 12 months ending in October 2021, according to agency data, and more than 179 million people traveled that year through U.S. ports of entry. The agency has not given a precise number of how many of those devices had their contents uploaded to the database for long-term review.

A Wyden aide said their office was told 2,700 DHS officials had access to the data. Bowker said that number is incorrect and that 5 percent of CBP's 60,000-employee operational workforce, or 3,000 officials, is given access.

Bowker said those authorized officials are trained, audited and supervised, and that the level of data access is appropriate given the size of the task. Bowker said no other government agency has direct access to this data but that officials can request information on a case-by-case basis.

"You have to have enough operational personnel who are able to do this properly around the clock," Bowker said. "We have 328 ports of entry. We are a 24/7 operation. You don't know who's going to show up where and when."

Law enforcement agencies must show probable cause and persuade a judge to approve a search warrant before searching Americans' phones. But courts have long granted an exception to border authorities, allowing them to search people's devices without a warrant or suspicion of a crime.

CBP officials have relied on that exception to support their collection of data from travelers' phones. Sens. Wyden and Rand Paul (R-Ky.) introduced a [bill](#) last year that would require border officials to get a warrant before searching a traveler's device.

The [CBP directive](#) gives officers the authority to look and scroll through any traveler's device using what's known as a "basic search," and any traveler who refuses to unlock their phone for this process can have it confiscated for up to five days.

In a [2018 filing](#), a CBP official said an officer could access any device, including in cases where they have no suspicion the traveler has done anything wrong, and look at anything that "would ordinarily be visible by scrolling through the phone manually," including contact lists, calendar entries, messages, photos and videos.

If officers have a "reasonable suspicion" that the traveler is breaking the law or poses a "national security concern," they can run an "advanced search," connecting the phone to a device that copies its contents. That data is then stored in the Automated Targeting System database, which CBP officials can search at any time.

Faiza Patel, the senior director of the Liberty and National Security Program at the Brennan Center for Justice, a New York think tank, said the threshold for such searches is so low that the authorities could end up grabbing data from "a lot of people in addition to potential 'bad guys,'" with some "targeted because they look a certain way or have a certain religion."

DHS investigators have increasingly used analytical and machine-learning tools to map out relationships and behaviors from vast reserves of phone data, meaning that even people whose phones have not been accessed could get swept up in a database search.

"It's not just what you say or do that's of interest to DHS, it's what everybody you know says and does," Patel said. "You may become suspicious just because someone you're only tangentially related to says something on your timeline or is on your call log. ... And when you have 2,700 people having access, you have very little control over the uses to which they put this information."

The CBP directive on device searches was issued several years after a federal appeals court [ruled](#) that a forensic copying of a suspect's hard drive had been "essentially a computer strip search" and said officials' concerns about crime did "not justify unfettered crime-fighting searches or an unregulated assault on citizens' private information."

The Wyden aide also said that the CBP database does not require officers to record the purpose of their search, a common technical safeguard against data-access misuse. CBP officials said all searches are tracked for later audit.

DHS' Office of Inspector General [said](#) in a 2018 report that officers had not always fully documented their device searches, making it hard to verify whether they had been properly run. CBP officials said then that they would conduct closer monitoring.

But in a [follow-up report](#) last year, the inspector general's office said the agency was continuing to "experience challenges" in sufficiently managing searches of people's phones. CBP said it was working to address the issues.

The "advanced search" program, which began in 2007 as a project known as Document and Media Exploitation, has expanded to cover more than 130 ports of entry, the inspector general's office [said](#) in its report last year.

CBP has over the years referred information from people's devices to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, local police agencies and the FBI for further investigation, the report said.

CBP officials give travelers a [printed document](#) saying that the searches are "mandatory," but the document does not mention that data can be retained for 15 years and that thousands of officials will have access to it.

Officers are also not required to give the document to travelers before the search, meaning that some travelers may not fully understand their rights to refuse the search until after they've handed over their phones, the Wyden aide said.

CBP officials did not say which technology they used to capture data from phones and laptops, but federal documents show the agency has previously used forensic tools, made by companies such as Cellebrite and Grayshift, to access devices and extract their contents.

A CBP officer who runs a search of the system will only see phone data that was extracted from checkpoints in their part of the country, agency leaders told Wyden's office. But officers will be told that a hit was found in the data from another region, and they are allowed to ask for permission to review that data. CBP did not say how many of those kinds of requests have been made, fulfilled or denied.

The CBP revelations have echoes of a National Security Agency program, first [revealed](#) in 2013 by Edward Snowden, that once captured millions of Americans' phone records as part of a surveillance initiative targeting suspected terrorists. Because officials could follow, or "hop," from one phone's records to the next, the system was found to have exposed the records of millions of people not suspected of any crime.

The NSA [ended the program](#) in 2019, saying some of the data had been collected in error and that the system had not been all that useful in tracking terrorists or fighting crime.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Iranian hackers moonlight their expertise
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/09/15/iranian-hackers-moonlight-their-expertise/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/09/15/iranian-hackers-moonlight-their-expertise/</a>
GIST	<p>Yesterday the Justice Department unsealed an indictment alleging that three Iranian men encrypted hundreds of systems around the world and demanded ransoms to unlock them.</p> <p>But the unsealed indictment said the men did so independently of the Iranian government, while <a href="#">the Treasury Department said</a> they were linked to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). <b>That called attention to how — for some of the United States' top adversaries in cyberspace — the lines between nation-state hacker and cybercriminal, between government employee and freelance contractor, aren't always clear.</b></p>

- “This is not just a ransomware issue. These are Iranian contractors who moonlight their skills but are ultimately associated with a dangerous state security organization,” **John Hultquist**, vice president of intelligence for the cybersecurity firm Mandiant, [said in a story](#) by my colleagues **Perry Stein** and **Ellen Nakashima**. “The access they’re gaining is being used for crime, but the IRGC will likely also try to use it for its own interests, perhaps for disruptive attack.”

U.S. officials usually list China, Russia, Iran and North Korea as the nations that pose the most severe cyberthreat to the United States. Researchers and others have pointed to instances of Chinese government hackers [moonlighting for profit](#). The same [goes for Russia](#). And the same apparently [goes for North Korea](#).

And in Iran? **Iran’s IRGC and its Ministry of Intelligence and Security are “heavily reliant on third-party contractors,”** BAE Systems’ principal threat intelligence analyst **Saher Naumaan** [told CNN’s Sean Lyngaas](#).

### **This week’s action**

The indictment said the hackers’ victims ranged from a Pennsylvania-based domestic violence shelter to targets in Iran — **the latter being one sign that they were working for themselves.**

Also Wednesday, U.S. federal agencies and international partners released an advisory about how IRGC-affiliated attackers exploit certain vulnerabilities in their operations; the State Department [offered a reward](#) for information on the culprits; and the Treasury Department sanctioned 10 people and two entities for their role in the ransomware intrusions.

Treasury said the indicted Iranians “do not directly align with a named advanced persistent threat group, some of their malicious cyber activity can be partially attributable to several named intrusion sets, such as ‘APT 35,’ ‘Charming Kitten,’ ‘Nemesis Kitten,’ ‘Phosphorus,’ and ‘Tunnel Vision.’” (The term “advanced persistent threat” usually refers to government-backed hackers.)

Wednesday’s action followed a peculiar pattern involving cyber contractors, Reuters’ **Chris Bing** tweeted:

*this is a very niche tweet. But the Iranian indictments today follow a pattern of weird unidentified twitter personalities publicly doxing a cyber intelligence contractor and then DOJ indicting those same dudes within about a year*

[11:54 AM · Sep 14, 2022 · Twitter Web App](#)

The joint action comes just days after the Biden administration [slapped another set of sanctions](#) on Iran, which followed U.S. ally Albania [cutting off diplomatic relations](#) with Tehran due to a July ransomware attack. That attack, though, appeared both targeted and politically motivated, and designed to disrupt rather than reap payouts.

### **Here’s where the issue of “targeting” becomes informative.**

The list of the indicted hackers’ victims is all over the place. That’s because they are [likely scanning the internet](#) broadly for vulnerabilities then attacking, rather than picking a target then trying to find a way in. Nation-state cyberespionage operations do, in fact, tend to go after a narrower set of targets that have the information they’re trying to obtain.

Cybersecurity firm Secureworks [recently took a look](#) at a group it calls Cobalt Mirage that overlaps with Wednesday’s indictments.

(Humorous aside: One of the indicted hackers, **Ahmad Khatibi**, apparently sloppily left his real name in the metadata listing him as the author of a PDF ransom note, SecureWorks found.)

While some of the group’s work was espionage-focused, **“the ransomware attacks could be another source of revenue that they can pursue without fear of prosecution by Iranian law enforcement,”** Secureworks wrote.

“They weren’t necessarily going after targets that had any strategic relevance to Iran,” **Rafe Pilling**, senior security researcher at Secureworks, told me. “They were going after a broad range of organizations that became more clearly financial over time.” Some Iranian groups, he said, instead use ransomware to harass or embarrass targets in places like Israel.

#### **Why it matters whether they’re contractors or not**

“I think it’s pretty critical and pretty important that there’s a host of cyber actors that are also involved with the IRGC — sometimes, people colloquially call them contractors — and that function as the long arm of Iranian cyber power,” **Behnam Ben Taleblu**, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies think tank, told me. “If you’re interested in curbing Iran’s long arm in cyberspace, going after these contractors has to be priority number one.”

[Return to Top](#)

## **Terrorism, Extremism**

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 Gitmo stuck in cycle of costly delays</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/16/us/politics/guantanamo-bay-prison-cost.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/16/us/politics/guantanamo-bay-prison-cost.html</a>
GIST	<p>GUANTÁNAMO BAY, Cuba — Fungus was growing in a new \$10 million tiny-house village being assembled at Camp Justice, the military court compound at Guantánamo Bay that has been troubled by mold for years. So plans to house lawyers assigned to the Sept. 11 case there have been postponed until late next year.</p> <p>Elsewhere on the base, an M.R.I. device suffered a “catastrophic failure” from neglect during the pandemic, according to court testimony. The military now intends to lease one through a process that could drag on for months.</p> <p>At a third site, construction of a \$115 million dormitory is a year behind schedule. It is meant to house soldiers assigned to the prison, an operation that employs 41 guards and civilians for each detainee.</p> <p>More than 20 years have passed since the George W. Bush administration brought the first detainees to this remote outpost in southeast Cuba four months after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. It was a makeshift, temporary mission, and it is still being run that way — “expeditionary style,” as the military calls it.</p> <p>When a brigadier general from the Michigan National Guard becomes the 21st commander of the detention mission later this year, he will inherit many of the same challenges as those who commanded before him: moldy, unsafe buildings; an outsize prison staff; and ailing, aging detainees, some still suffering the consequences of torture in C.I.A. prisons two decades ago.</p> <p>“At Guantánamo, they continually put Band-Aids on instead of coming up with realistic solutions,” said retired Brig. Gen. John G. Baker, who as a Marine lawyer oversaw military defense teams at Guantánamo Bay for seven years.</p> <p>He said detainee operations suffer “in some respects from some of the same problems we had in Iraq and Afghanistan, where planning was too often the length of a deployment cycle. There’s continually a temporary mind-set to what has become a permanent problem.”</p> <p>Over the years, the mission has cost \$7 billion and has housed 780 detainees and tens of thousands of troops on mostly yearlong or shorter tours of duty. Even now, with just 36 detainees at the prison, each costing \$13 million a year, there is no way of knowing when the mission might end.</p>



The high costs are attributable in part to the enormous rotating work force — the prison calls staff members “war fighters” — at Guantánamo, which has 6,000 residents, hotels, bars, a K-12 school, suburban-style neighborhoods and a community hospital. Problems have also arisen because of the stop-and-go nature of planning for a detention operation that one president vowed to close and another pledged to grow, neither reaching his goal.

The Bush administration brought in all 780 detainees, then reduced the prison population to about 240. President Barack Obama’s team found places for about 200, but Congress thwarted his administration’s plan to transfer the last 41 prisoners to the United States.

Today, there are 36 detainees, including the only prisoner serving a life sentence, a Yemeni man. The youngest is in his late 30s. Lawyers for Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the accused mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks, and four other men accused of being his accomplices are in secret talks to resolve the case by allowing them to plead guilty in exchange for life sentences.

Twenty-one of the detainees have been approved for transfer with security assurances. If U.S. diplomats find places to send them, that would leave 15 men at the prison.

The troubled construction was years in the making, as planning failed to keep pace with the reality on the ground.

The \$115 million barracks project offers an illustration.

The building was first proposed in 2013 by Gen. John F. Kelly, the Marine commander who had oversight of the prison and was championing quality-of-life improvements for the 1,900 prison staff members. Back then, Guantánamo held 166 detainees, for a ratio of 11 troops and civilians for every prisoner.

The Obama administration, which wanted to wind down prison operations, did not support the investment. Congress agreed to fund it in 2017 only after Donald J. Trump became president and vowed to refill the prison, an ambition he never realized.

Construction began three years later, in the midst of the pandemic.

It will accommodate 848 soldiers on nine-month deployments in suites, two “war fighters” sharing a bathroom. But it will not be ready before October 2023. A Navy spokeswoman blamed the delay, vaguely, on “unforeseen conditions” involving underground banks of ducts for base electricity and communications, “which have been addressed.”

Some projects were completed during the pandemic, mostly those that benefit the base, not the detainee mission. Contractors built a new section of road past the outdoor cinema and McDonald’s and finished a new \$65 million school for sailors’ children. The base just dedicated a new post office inside an older building that took \$3 million and 18 months to renovate.

But projects related to detainee operations were not as successful. Consider the case of the M.R.I. machine, which the military purchased for \$1.65 million in 2012 as part of a long-term strategy to care for aging detainees at Guantánamo Bay.

It arrived five years later, after a military judge ordered an M.R.I. study of the brain of the defendant in the U.S.S. Cole bombing case. Brain damage, regardless of whether it is explicitly linked to torture in C.I.A. detention, may mean the difference between a life or death sentence for a convicted defendant.

The U.S. Southern Command had diverted the machine to an Army hospital in Georgia.

At Guantánamo, the five-year-old device was troubled from the start, frequently out of service before it broke beyond repair during the pandemic.

“It was well known to be a problem,” Dr. Corry Jeb Kucik, a Navy captain serving as chief medical officer at the base, testified in June. “It was avoidable but not necessarily predictable.”

The military will now lease another machine, along with maintenance and delivery — another expeditionary solution to a long-term problem.

Doctors on the base have been overusing CT scans for years, Captain Kucik testified, by his calculation exposing prisoners to higher than the lifetime recommended amounts of radiation and increasing their risks of developing cancer.

“Because it is the imaging modality that is kind of the default, there is a risk that, you know, you could see cancers developing because of overuse or, you know, use in lieu of some other modality that would be equally effective, possibly superior, and less risky to the patient,” he said.

Captain Kucik was testifying in the case of a disabled prisoner, Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi, in his 60s, who has had five surgeries on his back at Guantánamo Bay and needs an imaging study before he gets a sixth operation. The United States is obliged under the Geneva Conventions to meet the medical needs of its war prisoners, and a military judge recently asked when a new M.R.I. machine would arrive.

The military has long addressed Guantánamo detention operations as a problem to be solved episodically, starting in the beginning, when Navy engineer built new cells at Camp X-Ray just days ahead of airlifts bringing new detainees from Afghanistan.

The idea of building today’s troubled tiny-house village emerged during the Trump administration, before prosecutors invited lawyers in the Sept. 11 case to engage in plea talks. The tiny houses were meant to accommodate legal teams and a jury if a military judge could wade through a decade of pretrial complications in the case and begin a death-penalty trial that was predicted to last a year.

Months into the pandemic, planners in the Office of Military Commissions decided to purchase about 150 single-occupancy, 375-square-foot “Casitas,” tiny houses from a Las Vegas firm named Boxabl that was in its earliest days.

“We didn’t even have a factory or anything,” said Galiano Tiramani, who established the business with his father. “It was just me and my dad.”

The Tiramani acquired a 170,00-square-foot warehouse and hired 100 workers to build, compact and truck the 30-by-20-foot shrink-wrapped containers to Jacksonville, Fla., for the military to ship by barge to Guantánamo Bay. Cost to taxpayers: about \$65,000 each, excluding site and infrastructure preparation, which is still underway.

Each container held a folded-up tiny house with finished flooring, a bathroom, kitchen and cabinetry. Assembly, according to the company, could be done in an hour.

At Guantánamo, it has taken months to install the first 50 atop a cracked old airstrip. For reasons that spokesmen at the war court are unwilling to explain, something went wrong during assembly, and during heavy rains water sloshed inside. By the time reporters were permitted a visit in July, workers had hammered plastic sheeting onto the roofs of the first 50 or so units while awaiting supplies for more substantial fixes.

Inside, reporters saw rusty hinges, mold and fungus spreading across cabinetry. Ron Flesvig, a spokesman for the war court, declined to say how much the repairs would cost and how many houses would require renovating.

“No one will be assigned billeting in any unit until all safety and habitability standards are met,” he said.

HEADLINE	09/15 NCTC: AQ, IS shaken by leadership losses
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.voanews.com/a/us-believes-al-qaida-is-shaken-by-leadership-losses-/6749437.html">https://www.voanews.com/a/us-believes-al-qaida-is-shaken-by-leadership-losses-/6749437.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Despite lingering doubts about the usefulness of so-called decapitation strikes, U.S. operations to kill senior terrorist leaders are paying dividends, according to one of Washington’s top counterterrorism officials.</p> <p>Both the Islamic State terror group and al-Qaida have been forced to stay in “survival mode” following the deaths of their leaders as a result of U.S. actions this year, National Counterterrorism Center Director Christine Abizaid said Thursday.</p> <p>Islamic State, in particular, she said, has been forced to refocus following the death of former emir Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, also known as Hajji Abdallah, following a U.S. special forces raid in northwestern Syria in February.</p> <p>At the time, senior U.S. military officials described Abu Ibrahim’s death as a “significant blow,” an assessment that has been borne out in the way IS has carried out operations in recent months.</p> <p>“What’s important about it is it’s not just him,” Abizaid told an intelligence and security conference outside Washington, responding to a question submitted by VOA.</p> <p>“It’s that he is the last in a long line of leaders who are no longer trying to attack the United States and trying to rout Syria and regain territorial control in a way that, I think, has really reflected a major talent loss in ISIS senior leadership,” Abizaid said, using another acronym for the terror group. “[It] has caused them to focus on kind of branch expansion that has diffused the threat and, again, made the focus on the United States less acute than we had seen in prior years.”</p> <p>The U.S. airstrike that killed longtime al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri at the end of July has, likewise, resulted in a cascading effect on the terror organization.</p> <p>“I think about now how important it was not just for the threat that he posed, but for the tie that he created across the al-Qaida network,” Abizaid said. “That tie is weaker today because he’s not on the battlefield.</p> <p>“And the weaker and the more diffuse that al-Qaida network is, I think, the better for U.S. national security,” she added.</p> <p>Abizaid’s assessment seems to reflect a shift in U.S. thinking, especially when it comes to Islamic State.</p> <p>For years, even in the aftermath of the collapse of Islamic State’s self-declared caliphate in Iraq and Syria, U.S. and Western military and counterterrorism officials warned that IS and its key affiliates had structured themselves in such a way that for every key leader who was killed, there was an understudy ready to take his place.</p> <p>And a recently declassified intelligence assessment written in May 2020 predicted IS was “organizing for a prolonged insurgency while rebuilding many key capabilities that are likely to expand its global reach and the threat it poses to U.S. and Western interests.”</p> <p>But recent intelligence estimates suggest IS’s hold among its followers in Iraq and Syria may be waning.</p> <p>While there are still areas that serve as key communication and financial hubs, like the al-Hol displaced persons camp in northeast Syria, the terror group’s fighters have been dispersed across remote areas. And its cadre of fighters, numbering as many as 16,000 last year is now estimated to be fewer than 10,000.</p> <p>The U.S. and its allies have also pointed to a series of operations following the raid on Abu Ibrahim that have whittled away at IS’s core leadership, including U.S. drone strikes and the arrests of senior IS leaders in Syria and Turkey.</p>

	<p>A recent report by the United Nations, based on member state intelligence, went as far as to caution that al-Qaida was poised to surpass IS as the world's preeminent jihadist terrorist organization, due in part to "a rapid succession of [IS] leadership losses since October 2019, with an as yet unknown impact on its operational health."</p> <p>Meanwhile, there are growing questions about the ability of the al-Qaida core to remain relevant and influential with al-Zawahiri gone.</p> <p>"This is challenging for al-Qaida," a former Western counterterrorism official told VOA following al-Zawahiri's death, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss recent intelligence assessments.</p> <p>Those assessments from the U.S., as well as those from several other countries that were shared with the United Nations, caution there are perhaps only a handful of al-Qaida core officials still in Afghanistan, long the group's base of operations.</p> <p>Al-Zawahiri's likely successor, Saif al-Adel, meanwhile, is believed to be in Iran along with the next most senior al-Qaida official, and there are questions as to whether Tehran will let them leave.</p> <p>Al-Qaida's other top leaders are based in Africa, and intelligence officials say they may be more interested in the fortunes of their particular affiliates than in the broader concerns of the terror group.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Declassified report predicted IS resurgence</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wdio.com/front-page/world-national/declassified-report-shows-us-predictions-of-is-group-threat/">https://www.wdio.com/front-page/world-national/declassified-report-shows-us-predictions-of-is-group-threat/</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. intelligence officials predicted two years ago that <a href="#">the Islamic State group</a> would likely regain much of its former strength and global influence, particularly if American and other Western forces reduced their role in countering the extremist movement, according to <a href="#">a newly declassified report</a>.</p> <p>Analysts said many of the judgments in the 2020 report appear prescient today, particularly as <a href="#">the group is resurgent in Afghanistan</a> following President Joe Biden's <a href="#">withdrawal of American forces</a> last year.</p> <p>The Islamic State group is no longer controlling huge swaths of territory or staging attacks in the United States <a href="#">as it did several years ago</a> before a major U.S.-led offensive. But it is now <a href="#">slowly rebuilding some core capabilities</a> in Iraq and Syria and <a href="#">increasingly fighting local governments</a> in places including Afghanistan, where an affiliate of the IS group, also known by the acronym ISIS, is fighting <a href="#">the ruling Taliban</a> following the U.S. withdrawal.</p> <p>"If the United States and our partners pull back or withdraw further from areas where ISIS is active, the group's trajectory will increasingly depend on local governments' will and capability to fill the resulting security voids," says the report, originally published in classified form in May 2020, months after then-President Donald Trump's administration reached <a href="#">an agreement</a> with the Taliban to pull out American troops.</p> <p>Biden and top national security officials have cited the recent <a href="#">strike killing al-Qaida head Ayman al-Zawahiri</a> as evidence that America maintains an "over-the-horizon" counterterrorism capacity in Afghanistan after the withdrawal. U.S. special forces also <a href="#">killed the head of the Islamic State group</a> in a February raid in northwest Syria.</p> <p>"The fact of those operations are, I think, reflective how serious this threat environment remains," said Christy Abizaid, director of the National Counterterrorism Center, on Thursday. But she added that analysts believe the terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland is "less acute than we've seen it" at any time since <a href="#">the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks</a>.</p> <p>Analysts have recently seen growth in IS group branches around the world, particularly in Africa, said Abizaid, who spoke at the Intelligence and National Security Summit outside Washington.</p>

“Afghanistan is a really interesting story along those lines about where the ISIS affiliate is and how we continue to be concerned about it,” she said.

Some outside analysts say al-Zawahri’s apparent presence in downtown Kabul suggests that extremist groups are more comfortable operating in Afghanistan — and that it will be tougher to counter the Islamic State group as it grows across the country.

Bruce Hoffman, senior fellow for counterterrorism at the Washington-based Council on Foreign Relations, called the May 2020 report “very clear-eyed and forthright.”

“It’s very different operating against ISIS in the isolated mountain redoubts or deep valleys of Afghanistan,” he said. “The advantages that enabled us to so brilliantly take out al-Zawahri, I would guess, are absent outside of Kabul.”

While the White House last month released declassified points from an intelligence assessment saying al-Qaida had not reconstituted in Afghanistan, the points did not address the Islamic State in Khorasan, the local IS group affiliate. IS-K was responsible for [killing 13 U.S. troops](#) outside the Kabul airport during the withdrawal and has continued to mount an insurgency against [the Taliban now in control of the country](#).

The National Security Council said in a statement that the U.S. is working to deny “ISIS-K access to financing, disrupt and deter foreign terrorist fighters from reaching Afghanistan and the region, and counter ISIS-K’s violent extremism.”

The May 2020 report was declassified this August and published online last week by the U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence. The ODNI periodically declassifies and releases older intelligence assessments. A spokesperson for the ODNI’s National Counterterrorism Center declined to answer questions about the assessment or address the intelligence community’s current view on the Islamic State group.

The report predicts that the Islamic State group’s global branches are likely to increase its “capability to conduct attacks in many regions of the world, including the West.” The U.S. would more likely face attacks from people inspired by the group’s ideology than plots directed or supported by the group, the report said.

Pressure by local governments where the IS group is active and their international partners “almost certainly will shape the scale of ISIS’ resurgence in Iraq and Syria and its expansion worldwide,” the report said.

Experts commonly agree with the report’s predictions, said Colin Clarke, an expert on counterterrorism who is director of research for The Soufan Group, an intelligence and security consultancy. But top intelligence analysts would have been involved in drafting and reviewing the assessment, formally known as a national intelligence estimate, he said.

Clarke noted several recent IS-linked attacks in Afghanistan, including [an apparent suicide bombing](#) outside the Russian embassy in Kabul that killed two diplomats, as well as ongoing fighting between militants and U.S.-backed forces at [a sprawling camp in Syria](#).

“There are some things that have happened in the last few weeks,” he said, “that make you wonder if the situation is not more dire than is being presented.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Summer 2022 among hottest on record
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/09/15/hottest-summer-august-world/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/09/15/hottest-summer-august-world/</a>
GIST	<p>Summer 2022 — a season marked again by historic heat waves, widespread drought and torrential rains — ranks among the hottest on record, according to data from NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).</p> <p>NASA data indicate June through August tied 2020 for the warmest summer worldwide in records dating back to 1880. Summer in the Northern Hemisphere also tied 2019 for the warmest on record.</p> <p>NOAA data indicate the meteorological summer tied for the fifth warmest worldwide in 143 years of records, and the Northern Hemisphere experienced its second-warmest summer on record.</p> <p>The disparity between the two data sets is explained by how each treats temperatures in the polar regions of the globe. NASA’s data set has more inputs from the Arctic and Antarctic regions, an area of the planet that is warming at a faster rate than other parts of the globe.</p> <p>Regardless, both sets of data show that this summer was abnormally warm and that the world has warmed dramatically over the past century, especially since 1980. Summers have warmed by 0.47 degrees Fahrenheit (0.26 degrees Celsius) per decade since 1980.</p> <p>“This is a remarkable testament to the persistence of ongoing global warming,” <a href="#">tweeted</a> climate scientist Gavin Schmidt, who said August ranked as the warmest on record in North America.</p> <p>Both NASA and NOAA affirm 2022 will almost assuredly rank in the top 10 warmest years on record. 2022 is also likely to be the eighth year in a row to be 2 degrees Fahrenheit (1 degree Celsius) warmer than the late 19th century.</p> <p><b>Highlights from June and July</b></p> <p>The summer started out hot and hardly abated. NASA data indicated June 2022 tied for the hottest June on record, July tied for the third warmest and August ranked as the second warmest globally. NOAA said June, July and August, individually and collectively, were the sixth warmest on record.</p> <p>All five of the warmest worldwide June-August periods have occurred since 2015, a sign of how the world’s warming continues to accelerate.</p> <p>June consisted of major heat spells, many broken monthly records and extreme weather disasters around the world. Heavy rain and melted snowpack caused historic flooding and evacuations around Yellowstone National Park and nearby towns.</p> <p>A heat wave swept across Japan in the middle of its rainy season, marking the worst streak of hot weather in June since 1875. Meanwhile, record rainfall fell across southern China and caused severe flooding and evacuations. The Norwegian city of Tromsø, located above the Arctic Circle, set a temperature record for the month.</p> <p>July was marked by record <a href="#">heat waves in Europe</a>. London hit 104 degrees, setting an all-time national temperature record. France, Germany, Spain, Ireland also set monthly records. The heat wave caused widespread fires and the <a href="#">worst glacier melt</a> in the Alps, one of which triggered a <a href="#">fatal avalanche in Italy</a>.</p> <p>Most of the United States experienced above-normal to <a href="#">record-warm temperatures</a> in July as well. Texas experienced its hottest July on record. At the end of the month, a prolonged heat wave in Northern California and the Pacific Northwest set records for the longest warm streaks in Portland and Seattle. The heat ignited wildfires, including the McKinney Fire that grew into California’s largest and deadliest fire of the year to date.</p> <p>Then August continued to scorch.</p>



## An unusually warm August

August 2022 was the hottest August recorded in North America and Europe and the second warmest August globally.

By August, around half of Europe was under [drought warnings](#) — the continent’s worst drought in at least 500 years. August also brought more intense heat to parts of the United States, especially in [parts of the West](#).

China saw its warmest August and its warmest summer on record. The country [battled a record-breaking heat wave and drought](#) this summer, shrinking Poyang Lake, usually the largest freshwater body in the country, by more than two-thirds.

The heat was widespread across the globe. New Zealand saw its second warmest August on record, while Belgium recorded its hottest August ever, with the European nation’s data going back to 1833. In Brazil, warmer-than-average temperatures fueled an active wildfire season in the Amazon. More than 33,000 blazes were detected in August, the most since 2010.

The heat also made August a bad month for sea ice — with the world seeing its [fifth-lowest August sea ice extent](#) on record.

In Antarctica, the sea ice extent fell to 4.2 percent below the August average, a record for the month. This is the third month in a row that Antarctica has seen its monthly record fall. In the Arctic, the August 2022 sea ice extent was a whopping 16.2 percent below the 1981-2010 average — the 13th-smallest on record.

Precipitation-wise, the headline of the month was a [wetter-than-normal monsoon season that brought intense rainfall to Pakistan](#). Much of the lower-lying plains in southern Pakistan were covered by floodwaters in August, with the floods there killing nearly 1,500 people.

Across the globe, precipitation totals varied widely. Wetter-than-normal weather was observed not only in Pakistan but also parts of the southwest United States, northern Japan and western India.

August saw both abnormally wet and dry conditions.

Drier than normal weather was seen in the western United States, western Europe and southeast Asia. These dry conditions caused farmers to struggle to grow crops, led to difficulties in generating hydropower and fueled rapidly growing wildfires.

The summer fits in with a generally warmer year overall. So far, the world has seen above-average temperatures year-to-date. Per NOAA’s data, 2022 has been the sixth-warmest year on record from January through August, with a global average temperature 1.55 degrees higher than the 20th-century average.

Of the annual records, 2016 remains the warmest, but there is a less than 0.1 percent chance that 2022 manages to exceed that warmth.

Yet, all of the 10 warmest years on record have occurred since 2010. If the heat keeps up, 2022 is likely to enter the top 10 as well.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 London: the queue to end all queues
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/15/queen-queue-coffin-westminster/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/15/queen-queue-coffin-westminster/</a>
GIST	LONDON — It is the queue to end all queues.

The line to see Queen Elizabeth II lying in state stretched from Westminster Hall, across the River Thames and then onward, past the London Eye Ferris wheel and the Tate Modern museum and Tower Bridge. On Thursday evening, it reached as far as Southwark Park in Southeast London.

A [government tracker](#) on YouTube said Thursday night it was nearly 5 miles long. That was an underestimate, though. A government spokeswoman confirmed to The Washington Post that the distance measured was “as the crow flies” and didn’t include the labyrinthine zigzag section in the home stretch.

But the mourners have been undeterred. Their beloved monarch has died, and they are determined to pay their respects. If they have to wait eight hours? Ten hours? They would prefer sooner rather than later, but they are fully committed.

After all, forming a queue is what the British do. Americans like to call it a “line,” but that word doesn’t quite encompass the almost holy rule-bound nature the British have developed of waiting patiently behind someone to achieve a goal.

Asked to explain the concept of British queuing, Robin Wight, 78, launched into an impassioned speech.

“The queue is something that we have in Britain. ... We’re used to being obedient in that way,” said Wight, who was about a five-minute walk — or more than two hours away — from the front. “But this queue is different to all other queues I’ve ever been in. Because everybody here is here for a purpose: to see the queen.”

“If you go to Stansted Airport, you’re in a queue for your holiday. Well, that’s fine,” he continued. “But here, this is not a queue, this is a magical moment we’re all sharing together.”

When he finished, thousands around him broke into (polite) applause.

This reporter joined the queue around 6 p.m. on Wednesday evening, meeting people who were planning to stay up all night if they had to see the queen’s coffin, which is lying in state — draped in the imperial standard and bearing the imperial state crown on a purple velvet pillow — until the funeral Monday morning.

I was quickly educated in queen queue decorum. Get a wristband with a number and obey that number. Stay in the queue. Do not push or shove. Do not cut.

There was a rumor that someone, six snaking rows in front of us, tried to jump the queue. But then someone else pointed out that this was unverified, as if to suggest the very notion was slightly scandalous.

Later it emerged that lawmakers had been given passes to jump to the front of the queue along with four guests of their choosing — which has, unsurprisingly, caused a stir. “Revolutions have been sparked by less,” [wrote](#) the Telegraph’s Tom Harris.

For context: In a major speech on Brexit in 2018, then-Prime Minister Theresa May called Europeans in Britain [queue jumpers](#). That was considered a serious insult.

In line for the queen, people formed little queuing families. As the hours stretched on, they banded together and offered comfort. They shared biscuits and tea and, sometimes, stronger drinks. Strangers who would normally never talk to each other in public situations were suddenly fiercely loyal. If you needed to use the toilet — there were portable “loos”; this was a well-planned queue, after all — then your queuing family held your place in line.

Everyone had a story about the queen: about times they saw her or met her or received a medal from her or had her as a boss. [Surveys](#) show that about a third of Britons met or saw the queen in person during her 70-year reign.

“The queen personally put this around my neck. It was a magic moment,” said Wight, the philosopher of queues, about his Royal Victorian Order medal for raising millions for charity. “I really want to come and say goodbye to her, with all these people here. ... I’d stay here for 30 hours if I had to.”

Hilary Beckley worked as a chef for Princess Margaret, the queen’s sister, and Beckley’s husband, Gary, worked as a palace carpenter.

“We met through the royal family. We have been married for 31 years,” said Beckley, 61. “We couldn’t not come.”

Of course, the queen was not just head of state of United Kingdom, but of 14 other countries — and head of the Commonwealth, which covers a third of the planet. Her death has stirred conflicted feelings in places [scarred by the legacy of British colonialism](#). And several Commonwealth realms are [reassessing their relationships](#) with the crown.

But Queen Elizabeth II also had fans around the world, with many people explaining that they separated her as an individual from imperial rule. The queue for the queen has been a testament to her international appeal.

The first three ladies were from Sri Lanka, Wales and Ghana. The Washington Post also interviewed people from India, Bangladesh, Ireland, Germany, Sierra Leone, the United States, Spain, Italy, Hong Kong, China, Australia — to name a few countries. They spoke of her mostly scandal-free life, which made her a model, and her children’s scandalous lives, which made her seem human. They referenced her devotion to country, [sense of humor](#), work ethic, travels abroad, longevity.

Joyce Skeete, 74, a retired nurse, has lived her adult life in London but was born and raised in Barbados, where she was a star netball player. As a 14-year-old, she was invited to have a meal with the queen, who was visiting one of her realms. “She has given her whole life to this country and all the other countries,” she said. “I think, for her, it is worth queuing.”

The queen queue has become a thing of its own. This isn’t the “mother of all queues” — that title can be retired. This is “The Queue.”

“I don’t particularly care either way about the Queen. But the queue? The Queue is a triumph of Britishness. It’s incredible,” wrote one social media user in a post that went viral. #QueueForTheQueen was trending on social media.

Another pointed out that “[queue](#)” is a beautiful word: “The actual important letter, and then four more silently waiting behind it in a line.”

For those of us joining the queue Wednesday night, it started off well enough. We moved forward at a decent clip — offering a false sense of optimism about how it would all unfold. About four or five hours in, things started looking bleak, as we hit the zigzag section, reminiscent of a bad day at the airport.

We learned that a royal guard standing next to the queen’s coffin [fainted](#) around 1 a.m., putting everything on pause for a bit.

Then, finally, we were inside. After 7-1/2 hours of leisurely chattiness in the queue, the scene inside Westminster Hall was starkly different.

Mourners entering the hall, with its cavernous hammer-beam roof, were met with silence.

Still in an orderly line, we were guided past the queen’s coffin, on its raised platform, guarded by soldiers wearing bearskin hats. Some mourners bowed and curtsied or nodded or whispered “thank you.” Anyone inclined to linger was urged along by officials motioning that it was time to go.

	<p>“It’s a whole other atmosphere in there, the world around you stops and you’re in the moment,” said Megan Foy, 35, after leaving the hall.</p> <p>She was there with her husband and their 9-month-old daughter and said they had “only” queued for six hours, reaching the hall around 2 a.m. “We got to skirt around a little bit because of the buggy situation,” she said, referring to her stroller.</p> <p>But for our portion of the queue, the waiting wasn’t quite over. A funeral rehearsal was underway in the wee hours of the morning, and no one was allowed to walk through the area around Westminster while the soldier practiced their marching.</p> <p>And so, together with everyone else who had just exited the hall, we were back in another queue.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 NFL Commanders mug: Washington State</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/nfls-washington-commanders-sell-mug-with-washington-state-in-the-background">https://komonews.com/news/local/nfls-washington-commanders-sell-mug-with-washington-state-in-the-background</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — The state of Washington has one NFL team, the Seattle Seahawks.</p> <p>But another NFL team apparently likes to pretend it is based here, or at least forgot during an advertising meeting.</p> <p>According to multiple tweets from the first weekend of the NFL season, the Washington Commanders are that team.</p> <p>The tweets, first put up by NBC Sports reporter <a href="#">Pete Hailey</a>, show an officially licensed Commanders' mug with a state outline. The problem? The Commanders are based out of Washington D.C. - not Washington State.</p> <p>Another NFL reporter, <a href="#">Nicki Jhabvala</a>, tweeted out the mugs were sold by the official team truck. However, they were removed at one point.</p> <p>This is not the first, nor likely the last, time someone has mistaken the Commanders franchise as being from Washington state. But it's also a head-scratcher as to how it happened with officially licensed products.</p> <p>There has been no published response from the franchise out of D.C. but they apparently sent Hailey a mug a few days later, per his Twitter account.</p>



## Crime, Criminals

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Judge sentences cartel boss to life
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/us-judge-sentences-mexican-cartel-boss-life-prison-2022-09-16/">https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/us-judge-sentences-mexican-cartel-boss-life-prison-2022-09-16/</a>
GIST	<p>MEXICO CITY, Sept 15 (Reuters) - Mexican crime lord Jorge Costilla Sanchez was sentenced to life in prison in a U.S. federal court on Thursday for his involvement in trafficking marijuana and cocaine to the United States, the Justice Department said.</p> <p>Costilla, also known by his nickname "El Coss," was head of the Gulf Cartel and one of former Mexican President Felipe Calderon's most-wanted criminals during his clampdown on drugs.</p> <p>He was captured by Mexican forces in 2012 and presented to the media alongside a spectacular display of gold-encrusted guns and jewelry. He was extradited in 2015 to the United States, which at the time offered a \$5 million reward for his arrest.</p> <p>"This was a long, but very important case to the district and especially our partners in Brownsville," said U.S. Attorney Jennifer B. Lowery. "The life sentence speaks for itself. Justice has now been served," Lowery added.</p> <p>Costilla, 51, was responsible for moving some 10,000 kilograms of cocaine and 140,000 kilograms of marijuana to the United States, the Justice Department said.</p> <p>"Costilla-Sanchez brought poison to our communities, and our collaborative efforts with our local and federal partners brought him to prison," said Special Agent in Charge Daniel C. Comeaux of the Drug Enforcement Administration - Houston Division, celebrating the sentence.</p>

	<p>"We will continue to aggressively go after any drug trafficking organization wanting to profit from our communities," said Comeaux.</p> <p>Costilla was a police officer in the Mexican border town of Matamoros before leading the cartel - also known as CDG for its initials in Spanish - after its former boss, Osiel Cardenas, was arrested, according to authorities.</p> <p>His sentence comes a day after Mexico's lower house voted to extend the policing powers of the country's army until 2028, in a bid to tamp down on rising violence. <a href="#">read more</a></p> <p>Human rights organizations have decried the bill, which still must be passed by the senate, due to fears it could trigger abuses by the state.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Drug dealer stakes claim Seattle business</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://mynorthwest.com/3638821/im-not-moving-and-i-got-guns-drug-dealer-stakes-claim-to-pioneer-square-business/">https://mynorthwest.com/3638821/im-not-moving-and-i-got-guns-drug-dealer-stakes-claim-to-pioneer-square-business/</a>
GIST	<p>Robert, the owner of Yellow Butterfly Coffee in Seattle's Pioneer Square neighborhood, feared for his life last Monday and again Thursday when a suspected drug dealer refused to move from his preferred spot on 3rd Ave.</p> <p>The man sold drugs outside the coffee shop for about five years. Robert finally had enough and asked him to move someplace else.</p> <p>"He says, 'I'm not moving, and I got guns.' Today, the same guy, he threatens me with a gun," Robert told KTTH.</p> <p>Robert hurried to summon Seattle Police. According to Robert, officers followed him on foot, seizing a gun and a knife. Seattle Police report threats of violence made on the 500 block of 3rd Ave. on Thursday morning.</p> <p>The incident left him shaken, but he's resolved to keep the business afloat.</p> <p>"I was thinking about just taking some time off. But I'm not going to do that. Because the coffee shop is doing so well. Pioneer Square is coming back to life. And I love the vibe. I love the visitors coming to Pioneer Square. It's such a great place to be," Robert added.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Complaint to UN: 'death by incarceration'</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/sep/15/civil-rights-us-death-incarceration-united-nations-solitary">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/sep/15/civil-rights-us-death-incarceration-united-nations-solitary</a>
GIST	<p>The moment Terrell Carter learned the death sentence he received decades ago would end, he was filled with extreme happiness and intense sorrow.</p> <p>Carter had spent 30 years of his life in prison without parole for second-degree murder he committed in Pennsylvania, one of six states in the US where there is no possibility of parole when sentenced to life. In July, after Governor Tom Wolf <a href="#">commuted</a> his sentence, Carter, now 53, regained his freedom after a nearly three-year process petitioning with the state board of pardons. Still, he said he felt "survivor's guilt".</p> <p>"It shows me the other guys who were just as deserving as I was couldn't make it not because they are not worthy but because the process is super arbitrary," Carter told the Guardian from a halfway house just a month after his release. "The system doesn't allow room for a person to seek redemption."</p>



A coalition of civil and human rights organizations on Thursday [filed a complaint](#) urging United Nations special rapporteurs to declare the United States' longstanding practice of subjecting people to life sentences, including without possible release, "cruel, racially discriminatory" and "an arbitrary deprivation of liberty" that violates incarcerated people's rights.

They argued that "death by incarceration" – a term describing life sentences without parole coined by Carter and other members of the [Right to Redemption Committee](#), a group of incarcerated people seeking the abolition of the practice – amounted to torture. In their complaint, the civil rights organizations asked the international watchdogs to pressure the United States, who leads the world in sentencing people to life imprisonment, to abolish the extreme practice altogether. They proposed instead to impose maximum sentencing laws that would eliminate the practice of "virtual life" sentences – those longer than a person's remaining years of life expectancy, often more than 50 years.

"Death by incarceration is the devastating consequence of a cruel and racially discriminatory criminal legal system that is designed not to address harm, violence, and its root causes, but to satisfy the political pressure to be tough on crime," the complaint noted.

Dozens of testimonies from incarcerated people sentenced to life detail the horrific toll so-called "death by incarceration" has not just on their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing but also the lasting impact separation has on their family members. Carlos Ruiz Paz, who is serving a life sentence in California, wrote in a testimonial that a life sentence without parole signaled a person was "irreparably damaged without hope of redemption", adding: "Extreme sentences affect the kids who grow up without us and the parents that will die without us at their side."

The complaint noted that the United States' use of virtual life sentences increased exponentially since the 1970s, particularly after the supreme court abolished the death penalty in 1972, prompting states to strengthen life sentencing laws for offenders. Even after the supreme court reversed course in 1976, extreme sentencing practices continued. By the 1980s and 90s, as the federal government incentivized states to impose harsher sentencing practices in an effort to curtail perceived rises in crime, more and more people were imprisoned for longer.

The toll of that suffering has disproportionately upended the lives of Black and brown people who have been subjected to over-policing throughout time, exposing them to the US carceral system and led to escalating mass incarceration. Organizers argue that that violates international human rights law prohibiting racial discrimination. "This systemic deprivation of resources, including education, healthcare and other social support and services, is coupled with the entry of more police and prisons in these communities and exposure to the criminal legal system," the complaint noted.

The US is the only country that sentences children under 18 to life without parole, a practice that the United Nations has already [singled out](#). And the US accounted for more than 80% of people worldwide serving life sentences without parole.

"We are the world leader in life imprisonment," said Kara Gotsch, deputy director of the Sentencing Project, one of the organizations involved in the UN complaint. "We're just continuing to warehouse people, expose them to dangerous conditions in prisons that are not built for old people, quite frankly. And it's not serving the public interest or our moral interest is to incarcerate elderly people, until they die, because they're not a threat to public safety."

Black people accounted for 12% of the US population in 2020 yet made up 46% of all incarcerated people serving life or virtual life sentences, [according](#) to the Sentencing Project. What's more, people of color account for more than two-thirds of those incarcerated serving life sentences in the US. For Latino Americans, the disparity is smaller but still stark, particularly at the state level: in [California](#), where a third of its prison population serves a life sentence, nearly 40% of those serving life sentences are Latino and a third are Black. Though women account for just 3% of the US prison population serving life sentences, the number of women serving such sentences grew 32% faster than men in the past decade.

When Rose Marie Dinkins reflects on the past five decades in SCI Muncy in Pennsylvania, she sees how the US criminal justice system doesn't allow mercy for change. Dinkins, a Black mother of four, was 24 when, in 1972, she was [sentenced](#) to two consecutive life sentences after she killed two police officers during an armed robbery. Her children, then toddlers, were now adults with children and grandchildren. Dinkins recounted how she had great-grandchildren she had never seen.

Dinkins saw how "the American justice system values some lives more than others", pointing to how Derek Chauvin, the Minneapolis police officer convicted of murdering George Floyd, will be eligible for parole.

"These discriminatory sentencing practices have gone on for far too long," she added. "No one deserves to die in prison who has made the effort to change for the better."

[Bret Grote](#), legal director of the Abolitionist Law Center, one of the organizations submitting the complaint, told the Guardian that pressure from the United Nations and the international community could bolster the ongoing movement.

He and others pointed to the impact past condemnations by the UN of solitary confinement practices and imprisonment of youth on life sentences have had on influencing legislative change. The complaint to the UN arises ahead of a case in Pennsylvania [challenging](#) the state's life sentences without parole statute for people convicted of a felony that led to someone's death, even if the person who received the sentence had no direct connection to the death.

By the time Carter first entered prison at 23, he had struggled with drugs and saw himself growing up in a society "that taught me that my Blackness was a curse". "It destroyed my self-esteem," he told the Guardian. Over time, after years of self-reflection work, he believed he could get a second chance, even as he was relegated to what he saw as a death sentence. He turned to writing, publishing three novels and co-authoring a Northwestern Law Review article with Rachel Lopez entitled [Redeeming Justice](#) that makes the case for rehabilitation and redemption from imprisonment.

He eventually [helped form](#) the Right to Redemption Committee, which was established in 2011 and advocates for abolishing life without parole in Pennsylvania and beyond, and they wanted to file a petition to the United Nations calling for "death by incarceration" to be classified as a human rights violation. Now that he's out of prison, he hopes to facilitate writing workshops and create "redemption hubs" for formerly incarcerated people to contribute back to society after release.

His release by commutation is a rarity in the US, especially for Black people seeking pardon: a 2011 study of pardons under former presidents George W Bush and Barack Obama found that white applicants had a 12% chance of acceptance while Black applicants had between 2 and 4% chance. And in Pennsylvania alone, Governor Tom Wolf commuted 53 life sentences over seven years, a far cry from the just six between 1995 and 2015.

"The idea of redemption should be something that the state facilitates as opposed to hindering. They hinder the idea of atonement by imprisoning people but also confining people in the worst expression of themselves for the rest of their lives, even though that's not who they are," Carter told the Guardian. "That's a gross violation of human rights."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	09/15 Mexico arrests in students' disappearance
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/16/mexican-general-arrested-over-disappearance-of-43-students-in-2014">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/16/mexican-general-arrested-over-disappearance-of-43-students-in-2014</a>
GIST	Mexican authorities have arrested a retired general and two other members of the army for alleged links to the disappearance of 43 students in the south of the country in 2014.

The assistant public safety secretary, Ricardo Mejía, said that among those arrested was the former officer who commanded the army base in the Guerrero state city of Iguala in September 2014, when the students from a radical teachers' college were abducted.

Mejía said a fourth arrest was expected soon. A government official with knowledge of the case who spoke on condition of anonymity confirmed that another member of the army had been arrested.

Mejía did not give names of those under arrest, but the commander of the Iguala base at that time was José Rodríguez Pérez, then a colonel. Barely a year after the students' disappearances – and after the families had already raised [suspicions about military involvement](#) and demanded access to the base – Rodríguez was promoted to brigadier-general.

The government official confirmed that Rodríguez Pérez had been arrested and said he was being held at a military base. The source said two of the others arrested were officers and the third was an enlisted soldier.

Last month, a government truth commission re-investigating the case issued a report that named Rodríguez Pérez as being allegedly responsible for the disappearance of six of the students.

The interior undersecretary Alejandro Encinas Rodríguez, who led the commission, said last month that six of the missing students were allegedly kept alive in a warehouse for days before being turned over to Rodríguez Pérez, who ordered them killed.

The report had called the disappearances a [“state crime”](#), emphasising that authorities had been closely monitoring the students from the teachers' college at Ayotzinapa from the time they left their campus through their abduction by Iguala police that night. A soldier who had infiltrated the school was among the abducted students, and Encinas said the army did not follow its own protocols to try to rescue him.

“There is also information corroborated with emergency ... telephone calls where allegedly six of the 43 disappeared students were held during several days and alive in what they call the old warehouse and from there were turned over to the colonel,” Encinas said. “Allegedly, the six students [were alive for as many as four days](#) after the events and were killed and disappeared on orders of the colonel, allegedly the then Col José Rodríguez Pérez.”

Numerous government and independent investigations have failed to reach a single conclusive narrative about what happened to the 43 students, but it appears that local police pulled them off buses in Iguala and turned them over to a drug gang. The motive behind the abduction remains unclear. Their bodies have never been found, though fragments of burned bone have been matched to three of the students.

The role of the army in the students' disappearance has long been a source of tension between the families and the government. From the beginning, there were questions about the military's knowledge of what happened and its possible involvement. The students' parents demanded for years that they be allowed to search the army base in Iguala. It was not until 2019 that they were given access along with Encinas and the truth commission.

Shortly after the commission's report, the attorney general's office announced 83 arrest orders, of which 20 were for members of the military. Federal agents then arrested Jesús Murillo Karam, who was attorney general at the time.

Doubts grew in the following weeks because no arrests were announced.

The administration of President [Andrés Manuel López Obrador](#) has formed a close public bond with the military. López Obrador pushed to shift the newly created national guard under full military authority and his allies in congress are trying to extend the time for the military to continue a policing role in the streets to 2028.

	On Thursday, Mejía also dismissed any suggestion that José Luis Abarca, who was mayor of Iguala at the time, would be released from prison after a judge absolved him of responsibility for the student's abduction based on lack of evidence. Even without the aggravated kidnapping charge, Abarca still faces other charges for organised crime and money laundering, and Mejía said the judge's latest decision would be challenged. The judge similarly absolved 19 others, including the man who was Iguala's police chief at the time.
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Yakima business indicted: rotten fruit juice</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/rotten-juice-sold-world-wide-yakima-washington-valley-processing-inc/293-0c2cb429-ad88-4d86-8c71-f4ca5cbf8265">https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/rotten-juice-sold-world-wide-yakima-washington-valley-processing-inc/293-0c2cb429-ad88-4d86-8c71-f4ca5cbf8265</a>
GIST	<p>YAKIMA, Wash. — A Yakima area business owner was indicted on 12 felony charges for allegedly conspiring with others to sell rotten fruit juice to customers worldwide.</p> <p>United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Washington Vanessa Waldref announced the indictment against 80-year-old Mary Ann Bliesner of Sunnyside on Thursday. Bliesner, the owner of Valley Processing Inc. (VPI), was indicted on 12 felony charges of fraud, conspiracy, false statements and violating food safety laws.</p> <p>According to the indictment, Bliesner and VPI "conspired with others to introduce unsafe, adulterated, and misbranded fruit juice products" into interstate commerce by selling them to customers between 2012 and 2018. The indictment states that these juice products contained harmful substances, were produced in unsanitary conditions and were unsafe for consumption.</p> <p>Bliesner and VPI allegedly lied to customers about the age and quality of their juice products, which included grape juice concentrate that was stored outside the VPI facility for years before being sold to customers. The concentrate was reportedly also sold to the National School Lunch Program, according to the indictment.</p> <p>Bliesner also allegedly failed to register two facilities she used to store fruit juice products and lied to U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) inspectors about the facilities' use. The indictment said one of the facilities located in Sunnyside was used to store thousands of gallons of grape juice concentrate for years in concrete vats that were not covered or cooled.</p> <p>FDA investigators learned about the Sunnyside facility during a May 2018 investigation. According to the indictment, the juice concentrate in the facility had a layer of mold and crust so thick that a live rat was seen walking on top of it.</p> <p>The indictment also states that testing of juice samples taken from the Sunnyside facility contained bird and rodent feces, fur, insects, decaying remains of animals, mold, yeast and other contaminants.</p> <p>The United States filed a complaint against Bliesner and VPI in November 2020. The complaint sought to prevent them from producing, storing and selling juice or juice products. In January 2021, Bliesner and VPI accepted a consent injunction in which they promised they were not processing, handling or shipping out any type of food and would not do so in the future without consent from the FDA.</p> <p>If found guilty, Bliesner faces a maximum sentence of up to 20 years in prison. VPI could also face fines of \$500,000 or more for each of the 12 charges against the company. VPI is now permanently closed.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Yakima: seizure illegal weapons from cartel</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/yakima-police-announce-major-seize-of-illegal-weapons-from-a-cartel">https://komonews.com/news/local/yakima-police-announce-major-seize-of-illegal-weapons-from-a-cartel</a>
GIST	YAKIMA -- Yakima police are announcing a major bust after finding and seizing an armory of illegal weapons from a cartel.

	<p>They say the operation was a team-up with Homeland Security and the ATF.</p> <p>YPD says while serving a search warrant, they found the large weapons cache and seized 27 high powered rifles, 9 handguns, and 2 shotguns.</p> <p>They also found cash, meth and fentanyl.</p> <p>These warrants are part of an investigation into the new generation Jalisco cartel.</p> <p>Police say the cartel is operating in Yakima right now, stealing high-end late model vehicles for use in smuggling drugs throughout the U.S.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Community: man throws rocks on SR900</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/man-throwing-rocks-cars-sr-900-community-fed-up/BQLPT55YINEFZPN7EAJT333CHY/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/man-throwing-rocks-cars-sr-900-community-fed-up/BQLPT55YINEFZPN7EAJT333CHY/</a>
GIST	<p>Renton, WA. – Viewers have reached out to KIRO7 about a man walking on State Route 900 in the Renton area who is throwing rocks at vehicles driving by and smashing windshields. They say he could be a danger to the entire community, and there is even a sign posted along the highway that reads “What W-S-P is not telling you: SR900 is not safe. Very Dangerous!”</p> <p>Tom Godfrey says his 2015 Stingray Corvette was hit by this person back in July. He was going eastbound on SR 900.</p> <p>“It’s the car of my dreams,” Godfrey said.</p> <p>“So, I figured it’s a beautiful day, I’m going to take the top off and I’m just going to relax and go down to the road, down to the store, and I’m going to take the long way home, right?” Godfrey said.</p> <p>He says he noticed a man walking near his car when he was stopped.</p> <p>“And all of a sudden, I see out of the corner of my eye his arm go up. And all I see is my window get completely shattered,” Godfrey said.</p> <p>“I just get goosebumps talking about it and I start shaking and stuff,” Godfrey said.</p> <p>But he says the trouble didn’t stop there.</p> <p>“So, I got out of my car. I’m talking to him across the street, and all of sudden, he starts running at me. So, now I’m thinking he’s going to destroy my car,” Godfrey said.</p> <p>“Met him halfway and we sat out there and fought in the middle of the road for like 3 or 4 minutes. Traffic stopped,” Godfrey said.</p> <p>Godfrey says during the fight, he tried to call 911 himself, but couldn’t. Luckily, Duane Anderson, who owns a business near where this happened, saw what was going on and called 911.</p> <p>“And then, he came up to me and he was just shaking like a leaf and he couldn’t use his phone because he couldn’t control his fingers,” Anderson said.</p> <p>He says he has seen the rock thrower on several occasions and believes he could cause more trouble.</p> <p>“I mean, the guy’s dangerous. No question about it,” Anderson said.</p>

	<p>Godfrey says the King’s County Sheriff’s Office responded to the incident, but was told by the deputies since it wasn’t their jurisdiction, they couldn’t file a report. He hopes when people drive down SR 900, they understand that it can be dangerous.</p> <p>“You know, they need to protect themselves. They need to keep their head on a swivel,” Godfrey said.</p> <p>Godfrey has filed a report with Washington State Patrol, but claims he was never given a case number. KIRO7 has reached out to WSP and is still waiting to hear back.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Retrial: getaway driver 2009 police killings</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/retrial-get-away-driver-lakewood-police-killings/281-7daaef4f-925e-46f2-bcb3-46e61912f2d3">https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/retrial-get-away-driver-lakewood-police-killings/281-7daaef4f-925e-46f2-bcb3-46e61912f2d3</a>
GIST	<p>LAKEWOOD, Wash. — A new trial can proceed in the case against the <a href="#">getaway driver</a> in the 2009 Lakewood police killings following a ruling in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.</p> <p>The trial against Darcus Allen is set to begin Sept. 22.</p> <p>Allen was the driver for gunman Maurice Clemmons, who killed Lakewood Sgt. Mark Renninger and officers Greg Richards, Tina Griswald and Ronald Owens as they sat in a coffee shop preparing for their Sunday morning shift on Nov. 29, 2009.</p> <p>At the time of the killings, Clemmons had posted bail following an arrest for punching officers. During a Thanksgiving dinner that Allen attended, Clemmons said he intended to kill any officers who came looking for him.</p> <p>Three days later, Clemmons asked Allen to drive him near the coffee shop. Allen also drove him away from it. Allen insisted he did not know Clemmons' plans ahead of time and that he did not realize anything had happened until they drove a few blocks and he saw that Clemmons was wounded.</p> <p>Clemmons, a felon from Arkansas, fled in a pickup truck that Allen drove. Clemmons evaded a massive manhunt that ended two nights later, when a lone Seattle patrolman encountered Clemmons on a street and shot him dead.</p> <p>A jury convicted Allen of first-degree murder as an accomplice in 2011. The jury cleared him of the aggravating factors: that he knew the victims would be police officers and that there were multiple victims or that the killings were planned. Those factors would have led to an automatic sentence of life in prison.</p> <p>In 2015, the state Supreme Court overturned those convictions and in 2018 ruled Allen's retrial couldn't include the aggravating factors because he'd already been acquitted.</p> <p>The Pierce County Prosecutor's Office refiled the charges without the aggravating factors, but Allen's defense argued trying him on those would be double jeopardy. That argument was rejected.</p> <p>Allen's defense filed it in federal court as a habeas corpus petition. In 2021, the federal district court dismissed the petition.</p> <p>Allen's defense appealed in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.</p> <p>On Sept. 15, a Ninth Circuit judge upheld the district court's ruling and dismissed the petition.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Gunman Seattle deadly shooting ‘not guilty’</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/jury-finds-gunman-not-guilty-in-downtown-seattle-shooting-that-killed-1-injured-6/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/jury-finds-gunman-not-guilty-in-downtown-seattle-shooting-that-killed-1-injured-6/</a>



Marquise Tolbert burst into tears Thursday when a King County jury found him not guilty on murder and assault charges stemming from his involvement in a [2020 gunbattle in downtown Seattle](#) that killed one person and injured six others.

The jury of seven men and five women reached their verdicts after a day of deliberations, finding Tolbert not guilty of first-degree murder and six counts of first-degree assault. Tolbert, 27, sobbed in relief as Superior Court Judge Melinda Young read the verdicts aloud, then embraced his defense attorneys after jurors filed out.

Tolbert was tried [separately from his co-defendant](#), William Tolliver, 26, who is scheduled to stand trial on the same charges on Nov. 7.

“We are so relieved ... It was a long, grueling trial for all of us,” said attorney Lisa Mulligan, who defended Tolbert with co-counsel Emily Gause.

During the trial [that began July 28](#), Mulligan and Gause presented evidence that Tolbert fired in self-defense and that Seattle police detectives rushed to judgment in deciding Tolbert and Tolliver were the instigators of the six-second gunfight that erupted during the evening commute on Jan. 22, 2020.

Though the bullets that struck all of the victims came from Tolliver and Tolbert’s guns, Gause said video evidence showed someone went inside the McDonald’s on the corner of Third Avenue and Pine Street to get Jamel Jackson, a rival gang member, who aggressively confronted the two men and brandished his gun.

“They didn’t really care to find out what happened ... They just stopped investigating once they had the video” and identified the shooters, Gause said of Seattle police outside the courtroom.

She said testimony at trial showed the lead detective didn’t analyze all of the video evidence from that night until June — and Gause said it showed “Jamel Jackson came out [of the McDonald’s] and initiated the whole thing.”

Jackson, 24, pleaded guilty to second-degree unlawful possession of a firearm in August 2021 for his role in the gunfight, court records show. He was sentenced to 16 months in jail but by that time, he had already served 576 days — roughly 19 months — in custody, and was released.

Jackson was shot in the leg during the gunbattle.

Senior Deputy Prosecutor Jennifer Petersen declined to comment on the jury’s verdicts.

During opening statements, Senior Deputy Prosecutor Brandy Gevers said Tolliver was the first to pull his gun and fire at Jackson. But Gause said Jackson was the one who aggressively confronted Tolbert and Tolliver and brandished his gun before Tolliver “freaked out” and fired the first shot at Jackson.

Gevers, who wasn’t in court Thursday, said at the time that Jackson “got off five rounds” from his 9-mm handgun as he ran east on Pine Street, and that Tolbert and Tolliver, who ran south on Third Avenue, blindly fired .380- and .40-caliber handguns over their shoulders after Jackson was no longer in sight, indiscriminately shooting six people on the crowded sidewalk.

Based on the shell casings found at the scene, Tolbert fired 10 rounds, Tolliver fired nine and Jackson fired at least five times, according to the attorneys.

Tanya Jackson, 50, who is not related to Jamel Jackson, was seen on video crossing Third Avenue before collapsing outside the McDonald’s, where she died from a gunshot wound.

A woman using a wheelchair and who had a small dog in her lap was shot three times in the abdomen and nearly died, while a 9-year-old Bremerton boy on his way to the ferry terminal with his family after

	<p>a day trip to the Pacific Science Center suffered a fractured femur and collapsed near a lamppost, jurors were told.</p> <p>A man on his way to a pickup basketball game and two Amazon employees on their way home from work also suffered nonfatal gunshot wounds.</p> <p>Tolbert and Tolliver were arrested in Las Vegas nine days later.</p> <p>After Tolbert was found not guilty of the murder and assault charges, Mulligan told the judge Tolbert was pleading guilty to first-degree unlawful possession of a firearm, a charge bifurcated from the main trial because it would have required disclosing Tolbert's past felony convictions to the jury to prove he couldn't legally possess a gun.</p> <p>Tolbert is to be sentenced Friday on the firearm charge but since he has been jailed since his arrest in February 2020, it is expected he'll be sentenced to time served and released from custody, his attorneys said.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Virginia denies DC sniper parole</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Sniper-denied-parole-20-years-after-terrorizing-17445058.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Sniper-denied-parole-20-years-after-terrorizing-17445058.php</a>
GIST	<p>RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Virginia has denied parole to convicted sniper killer Lee Boyd Malvo, ruling that he is still a risk to the community two decades after he and his partner terrorized the Washington, D.C., region with a series of random shootings.</p> <p>Malvo was 17 when he and John Allen Muhammad shot and killed 10 people and wounded three others over a three-week span in October 2002. Multiple other victims were shot and killed across the country in the prior months as the duo made their way to the nation's capital region from Washington state.</p> <p>Malvo was convicted of capital murder in Virginia and sentenced to life in prison without parole. But a series of Supreme Court rulings and a change in Virginia law gave Malvo the opportunity to seek parole after serving nearly 20 years in custody.</p> <p>The Virginia Parole Board rejected his request on Aug. 30, finding that Malvo remains a risk to the community and should serve more of his sentence before being released on parole, state records of Parole Board decisions for August show.</p> <p>“Release at this time would diminish seriousness of crime; Serious nature and circumstances of your offense(s),” the Parole Board wrote.</p> <p>Malvo's accomplice, John Allen Muhammad, was executed in Virginia in 2009. Malvo, now 37, was sentenced to life without parole for the three Virginia killings. But after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2012 that mandatory life sentences for juveniles are unconstitutional, two federal courts found that Malvo was entitled to new sentencing hearings. The Virginia legislature also passed a law in 2020 that gave juvenile offenders an opportunity to seek parole after serving 20 years.</p> <p>Malvo was a 15-year-old from Jamaica who had been sent to live in Antigua when he met the much older Muhammad. Muhammad trained and indoctrinated Malvo, and in 2002 the pair embarked on a nationwide killing spree that ended with the 10 slayings in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.</p> <p>Trial testimony indicated the shootings were a plan for Muhammad to regain custody of his children by killing his ex-wife and making her death appear to be a result of random violence.</p> <p>Malvo is serving his sentence at the super maximum-security Red Onion State Prison in Virginia.</p>

	Even if Malvo had been granted parole in Virginia, he also received a life prison sentence in Maryland for crimes in the neighboring state. Last month, Maryland's highest court ruled that Malvo must be resentenced for his crimes there.
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 Oklahoma: missing people, buried bones</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/09/15/oklahoma-murders-white-supremacists/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/09/15/oklahoma-murders-white-supremacists/</a>
GIST	<p>OKLAHOMA CITY — The caller had news but warned LaVonne Harris not to get her hopes up.</p> <p>Harris’s son, 33-year-old Nathan Smith, had vanished along a dirt road in Oklahoma one freezing night more than two years earlier. Detectives had long stopped checking in with her, and Harris could feel her search growing lonelier with each passing month.</p> <p>The call in April, from an advocate for families of the missing, wasn’t encouraging, but it was a lead: Authorities in rural Logan County, just north of here, had discovered human remains belonging to more than one person. Also, the caller added delicately, the remains weren’t intact.</p> <p>Harris, 58, sat down to steady herself. She listened, then hung up to tell her daughter.</p> <p>“I said, ‘Lou, they found these bodies,’ ” Harris recalled. “ ‘They’ve been burned and cut.’ ”</p> <p>Smith is among a dozen or more people who have disappeared in recent years from the wooded, unincorporated terrain outside the Oklahoma City metro area, a rural haven for drug traffickers. Some families said they’re scared to call police or even to put up “missing person” signs because they suspect the involvement of violent white-supremacist prison gangs.</p> <p>In April, authorities acting on a tip said they found charred piles of wood and bone on a five-acre patch of Logan County, opening one of the grisliest and most sensitive criminal investigations in Oklahoma’s recent history.</p> <p>Behind the 10-foot metal walls of a compound with links to the Universal Aryan Brotherhood, a white-supremacist prison gang, officers found what they believe to be a body dumping ground where multiple people ended up dismembered and burned, according to four Oklahoma officials with knowledge of the investigation. They spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the extraordinary security precautions around the case.</p> <p>The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, or OSBI, which is leading the multiagency state and federal probe, confirms that remains have been found but will not say how many. An April 29 <a href="#">report</a> in the Oklahoman newspaper — the first news of the discovery — quoted the state medical examiner and other sources as saying agents were investigating “whether a white supremacist prison gang is behind nine or more disappearances” after the discovery of “the comingled remains of possibly three people.” The report said remains also were found at a second site, near an oil well about 18 miles away in the tiny town of Luther.</p> <p>Four months later, the scope of the case remains murky. A law enforcement official, who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation, said they were informed the count was up to “12 different DNA profiles.” One family of a missing person said they were told of eight; another heard about three.</p> <p>The OSBI has taken significant steps to keep the investigation opaque, including advising families of the missing to stay quiet.</p> <p>“We’re just trying to keep some people alive at this point,” a second official said, describing the struggle to protect potential witnesses.</p>

That level of danger is a jarring reminder of the unseen threat of white-supremacist prison gangs, whose leaders run crime syndicates from behind bars through a network of “enforcers” on the outside, according to extremism monitors and Justice Department [court filings](#).

The gangs have carried out hate-fueled attacks both in and out of prison, with the bulk of their free-world violence targeting rivals and informants, authorities say. Because the gangs typically keep their business within the criminal underground, the attacks go largely undiscussed in the broader national conversation about rising violence by far-right groups.

Oklahoma is a “problem state,” with at least five significant white-supremacist prison gangs, said Mark Pitcavage, an Anti-Defamation League researcher who has [monitored](#) the groups for decades. He co-authored a 2016 study that called prison gangs the fastest-growing and deadliest sector of the U.S. white-supremacist movement, noting that they “combine the criminal intent and know-how of organized crime with the racism and hate of white supremacy, making them twice as dangerous.”

The Logan County investigation, authorities say, involves one of the most ruthless of the gangs: the Universal Aryan Brotherhood, also known as the UAB.

One of the main UAB “shot-callers,” authorities say, is 57-year-old Mikell “Bulldog” Smith, an [inmate so violent](#) that an Oklahoma prison report once called him “the most dangerous man in the penitentiary” and corrections officials built a special cell for him in 1989. Smith is serving life without parole for the 1985 killing of a math teacher in a robbery. Soon after arriving in prison in 1987, he stabbed a fellow inmate. Two years later, he nearly killed a prison guard by stabbing him in the heart with a blade attached to a broom handle. In 2014, Smith was convicted of choking a cellmate to death with a sheet.

Members of Smith’s extended family own various parts of the five-acre area where remains were found in Logan County. Smith’s wife, Robin, was listed as owner of the fortified compound; his brother Charles owns an adjacent property, according to sale records. Another brother, Phillip, [disappeared](#) from the county in 2020, one of the long list of cases authorities say are under review.

On Aug. 19, according to state investigators, another Smith relative, David, was arrested at the compound on charges related to a stolen vehicle and possession of a firearm by a felon.

In the OSBI’s few public statements about the remains, there is no mention of the alleged ties to one of Oklahoma’s bloodiest prison gangs or reference to the site in Luther. The statement said only that “law enforcement from multiple agencies recovered bone fragments” in Logan County and were working to identify them and determine the cause of death.

The medical examiner’s office and law enforcement agencies involved either declined to comment on the record or never responded to queries. The OSBI declined to comment beyond its news releases.

“The investigation is very fluid and very active,” said an [OSBI release](#) dated Aug. 8. “Because of that, the volume of rumors and speculation is high. The OSBI will not comment on rumors as that can jeopardize the ongoing investigation.”

The statement said state investigators and sheriff’s offices in three counties “have been working closely with the families of the missing persons,” including collecting DNA samples to help with identification. That work will take time, the release said, because of “the physical condition of the remains recovered.”

### **Buried secrets**

On a scorching recent afternoon, Carol Knight looked out over her 20-acre plot in rural Choctaw, about half an hour’s drive from where the remains in Logan County were found. A successful bail bond agent, Knight bought the property in 2020 with plans to build a country dream home.

“Instead, I got a chop shop,” she said.

As Knight began clearing the land, she and her husband uncovered jaw-dropping surprises buried underground: “We dug up a car, we dug up a motorcycle. We hauled three boats off the property.” She carted off about 300 tires, apparent leftovers from cars that were “chopped” and sold for parts. Knight said she almost broke her ankle falling in a “hidey hole,” one of several camouflaged pits.

The previous residents had extensive criminal records and hung with a crowd that included known UAB associates, according to authorities and public records.

Knight said she saw the buried junk as an expensive nuisance — until she received a tip last year that a body also might be hidden on her land. Unsettled, Knight halted work and sought help from fellow bondsman Jathan Hunt, a licensed private detective who brings his specially trained German shepherds on searches for missing people.

“I said, ‘J, why don’t y’all bring your dogs out here and see if I got a dead body,’ ” she recalled.

The rumors were tied to the disappearance of 43-year-old David Anthony Orr, a Hispanic man from the Oklahoma City area who struggled with a methamphetamine addiction and ran in the same drug circles as UAB associates, according to one of Orr’s family members and public information compiled by Hunt.

In January, Hunt searched Knight’s property as part of a team of about two dozen volunteers using five dogs with training on “clandestine grave detection.” When the dogs “alerted” to two areas — near a large pit and a pond — the searchers called Oklahoma County investigators. The authorities left with a bone that Hunt thought resembled a metatarsal, part of the foot, but he said he never heard back on whether it was determined to be human.

After the search, Hunt said, he kept thinking about Orr and added the case to volunteer work he was doing with Oklahoma City Metro Search and Rescue, a nonprofit group that helps families of missing relatives.

In most cases he’d worked on, Hunt said, families were eager to hang posters or appear on local news. Not so with Orr, who was last seen on Jan. 16, 2021.

“This was the first one where I was like, ‘Man, no one is looking for this guy, not even his family or friends,’ ” Hunt said. “I thought, ‘That’s weird.’ ”

Hunt made inquiries and discovered that Orr does indeed have relatives who are desperate to find him — it’s just too dangerous, he said, for them to publicly seek information on his whereabouts.

One of Orr’s relatives, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the risks, said they were advised by people they described as Orr’s associates to stop searching or else they’d “end up like him.” On the street, the relative said, Orr’s death is accepted as fact, but the family can’t acknowledge it or mourn without confirmation.

“You have to live with the anxiety, you have to live with the fear that these people are still out there,” the relative said. “You’ve got to be careful who you talk to.”

Using the tips he was picking up, Hunt said, he found overlapping social connections among at least five missing people, including Orr, and UAB associates. Last spring, Hunt said, he received a tip that Orr’s body was burned and buried on a property in Logan County, possibly along with three others. Hunt said he tried to share the information with investigators, only to get the brush-off.

Finally, Hunt said, he reached a lead detective on the case, who told him to “sit on it” because “we’ve got something in the works.”

Two days later, authorities carried out the raid in which they found remains. The Logan County property matched the description Hunt had heard about in the search for Orr.

Hunt called Knight, whose response was: “Oh, s---.”

### **A risky raid**

At daybreak on April 13, dozens of law enforcement officers massed outside the Logan County compound with a search warrant, prepared to face an ambush.

Given the reputation of the UAB, planners had gone over all the worst-case scenarios, law enforcement officials recalled. They had taken into account the possibility of booby traps and explosives. They wondered if cages could be opened remotely for the simultaneous release of the more than 25 pit bulls on the property.

Above all, they worried about a potential shootout as they entered through what Logan County Sheriff Damon Devereaux called the “fatal funnel,” a narrow, metal-sided driveway entrance.

“We were prepared for the worst day of our lives,” he said.

Instead, authorities easily swept onto the empty site. Devereaux said he counted 28 dogs in cages; they looked healthy and well-fed. He recalled it was the second day of the search when a text arrived from an OSBI investigator saying: “Just confirming that we have found some human remains.”

“Holy cow, this is a big deal,” the sheriff recalled thinking.

Devereaux agreed to address only parts of the investigation that are already public knowledge. He declined to give details on the remains or any possible suspects, deferring to the OSBI.

Before he became sheriff in 2017, Devereaux, 52, had served as police chief in his hometown, Guthrie, the Logan County seat. He dealt with college parties and garden-variety crime, he said, but nothing like the violent characters he’s encountered as sheriff.

The county jail, Devereaux said, regularly holds associates of white-supremacist prison gangs, people facing hits from Mexican cartels, and a host of others charged in connection with the drug rings that operate in the backwoods of middle America.

“They’re introducing me to the Irish Mob and the UAB and it’s just like, ‘Excuse me?’ ” Devereaux said, referring to white-supremacist prison gangs in the state. “I had no idea until I became the sheriff, because it’s confined in these walls.”

Devereaux considers himself a stickler for policing that prioritizes constitutional rights. So, he said, when he first noticed the compound “getting fortified with metal 10-foot fencing and iron gates,” he was suspicious but had no probable cause to investigate.

“We’re a county that likes to burn our trash, shoot our guns and drink our beer. And that’s kind of what we embrace in Oklahoma, the freedom to do all that,” he said. “There’s a lot of people who move out there to be left alone.”

But then, maybe six months ago, he said, his deputies started hearing rumors about a missing man whose body was hidden in Logan County. Other law enforcement officers started looking into the tips, too, Devereaux said, and soon the investigation ballooned into a mammoth effort with about half a dozen agencies involved.

“This puzzle had a lot of lost pieces,” Devereaux said. “And now all of a sudden we’re putting some pieces together and starting to see the picture.”

### **An agonizing wait**



Harris, the mother of Nathan Smith, who is no relation to Mikell Smith, said she calls the medical examiner's office almost weekly to make sure investigators are still looking for her son among the remains.

When Harris heard the latest twist — a possible connection to a white-supremacist prison gang — her heart sank. Early in her search, she said, a family friend had helped her go through her son's social media contacts looking for clues about his disappearance. "She says, 'They're Aryan Brotherhood, look! All these people — a lot of them — are doing the signal,' " Harris said, alluding to gang hand signs. "I thought, 'Oh my gosh, what has my son got into?'"

As with other missing people, Nathan Smith's intersection with suspected prison-gang associates stemmed from drugs, specifically methamphetamines, his mother said. The UAB is known to be a major player in Oklahoma meth trafficking, according to authorities and a 2018 federal indictment of 18 members on racketeering charges.

The [indictment](#), one of the most detailed public accounts of UAB operations, accused the gang of distributing an estimated 2,500 kilos of meth annually in Oklahoma, and laid out related crimes such as "murder, kidnapping, witness intimidation, home invasions." As part of a plea agreement, one member described how he and others kidnapped suspected informants and "used tarps, shovels, blow torches and other items in an attempt to scare and intimidate the victims."

Today, the UAB remains active, still tied to gruesome homicides and big drug cases, according to court papers and news reports. In August, [nine UAB-linked suspects](#) were charged in the killing of a rival gang member who prosecutors say was lured out of his motel room, tortured and dumped in a ditch.

The missing people authorities have mentioned in connection with the Logan County case are mostly men with long histories of drug arrests and prison stints. One exception is 21-year-old newlywed Audrey Slack, who hasn't been seen since Jan. 11.

That morning, Slack called her family from a motel outside Oklahoma City while on a road trip with her husband, Stephen Walker, who is more than twice her age and whose tattoos signal membership in another white-supremacist prison gang.

Slack said to expect the couple home by 8 p.m., but they never arrived. Their black pickup truck was found with a bullet hole and traces of blood and bleach on the interior, according to a [search warrant](#) filed Aug. 2.

Slack's relatives, who asked that their names and other identifying details be withheld, said investigators had called out of the blue in April to ask for dental records. The family, which had already submitted DNA samples, refused unless the detective told them what was going on. That's when the family learned that multiple human remains had been found about a 15-minute drive from where the missing couple were last seen.

Since that day, they've been stuck in the same excruciating limbo as the other families, waiting for identifications that could take many more months.

"I need to know," said one of Slack's relatives. "I need to settle my heart."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>09/16 UK police: 2 officers stabbed in London</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/uk-police-officers-stabbed-central-london-90003024">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/uk-police-officers-stabbed-central-london-90003024</a>
GIST	<p>LONDON -- London's police force says two officers have been hospitalized after being stabbed in central London early Friday. It says the attack is not being treated as terrorism.</p> <p>The Metropolitan Police force says officers "encountered a man with a knife" in the Leicester Square area, a busy tourist hub, at a round 6 a.m. (0500GMT).</p>

	<p>The force says both officers are in the hospital and it is awaiting updates on their conditions.</p> <p>A man was arrested on suspicion of grievous bodily harm and assaulting an emergency worker. He is also in the hospital. Police say a Taser was used during the arrest.</p> <p>Police say they are investigating the circumstances around the incident. It comes as London is flooded with mourners for Queen Elizabeth II's lying-in-state, but the stabbing did not occur near any commemorative sites.</p> <p>London Mayor Sadiq Khan called the attack "utterly appalling."</p> <p>"These brave officers were doing their duty and assisting the public at this momentous time for our country," he said. "My thoughts and prayers are with them, their loved ones and police colleagues following this disgraceful attack."</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>09/15 No posthumous pardon of George Floyd</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/texas-board-denies-posthumous-pardon-george-floyd-89987047">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/texas-board-denies-posthumous-pardon-george-floyd-89987047</a>
GIST	<p>HOUSTON -- A Texas board on Thursday declined a request that George Floyd be granted a posthumous pardon for a 2004 drug arrest made by a now-indicted ex-Houston police officer whose case history is under scrutiny following a deadly drug raid.</p> <p>The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles in October 2021 had initially decided to unanimously recommend that Floyd become just the second person in Texas since 2010 to receive a posthumous pardon from the governor.</p> <p>But before Texas Gov. Greg Abbott could make a final decision in the case, the board in December reversed its decision, saying that "procedural errors" were found in its initial recommendation in Floyd's case and it needed to reconsider more than a third of a group of 67 clemency applications it had sent to Abbott.</p> <p>"After a full and careful review of the application and other information filed with the application, a majority of the Board decided not to recommend a Full Pardon and/or Pardon for Innocence," the board wrote in a letter it sent Thursday to Floyd's attorney, Allison Mathis, with the Harris County Public Defender's Office in Houston.</p> <p>In its letter, the board said another request for a posthumous pardon for Floyd could be submitted again in two years. The letter did not specify why the board had denied the request.</p> <p>The board's decision was first made public Thursday by a reporter with The Marshall Project.</p> <p>Mathis and a spokesperson for the paroles board did not immediately return emails or calls seeking comment.</p> <p>Mathis had first submitted the pardon request in April 2021.</p> <p>Floyd, who was Black, grew up and was laid to rest in Houston. In June 2021, former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin, who is white, was sentenced to 22 1/2 years in prison for Floyd's killing, which led to a national reckoning in the U.S. over race and policing.</p> <p>Years before his May 2020 killing, Floyd was arrested in Houston in February 2004 by former police officer Gerald Goines for selling \$10 worth of crack in a police sting. Floyd later pleaded guilty to a drug charge and was sentenced to 10 months in a state jail.</p>

<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p>Goines is now facing two counts of felony murder, as well as other charges in both state and federal court, for a deadly 2019 drug raid in which Dennis Tuttle, 59, and his wife, Rhogena Nicholas, 58, were killed.</p> <p>Prosecutors allege Goines lied to obtain the warrant to search the couple's home by claiming that a confidential informant had bought heroin there. Goines later said there was no informant and that he had bought the drugs himself, they allege. Prosecutors have accused Goines of making up informants in other cases as well.</p> <p>"We supported George Floyd's pardon because we do not have confidence in the integrity of his conviction. We support clemency because it is appropriate," Harris County District Attorney Kim Ogg said Thursday.</p> <p>About 150 drug convictions tied to Goines have since been dismissed by prosecutors. Earlier this month, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals ordered that a fifth conviction tied to Goines be overturned.</p> <p>Goines has maintained his innocence and his lawyer is fighting the charges.</p>
-------------------------------	--

**Information From Online Communities and Unclassified Sources/InFOCUS is a situational awareness report published daily by the Washington State Fusion Center.**

**If you no longer wish to receive this report, please submit an email to [intake@wsfc.wa.gov](mailto:intake@wsfc.wa.gov) and enter UNSUBSCRIBE InFOCUS in the Subject line.**

**DISCLAIMER - the articles highlighted within InFOCUS is for informational purposes only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Washington State Fusion Center, the City of Seattle, the Seattle Police Department or the Washington State Patrol and have been included only for ease of reference and academic purposes.**

**FAIR USE Notice** All rights to these copyrighted items are reserved. Articles and graphics have been placed within for educational and discussion purposes only, in compliance with 'Fair Use' criteria established in Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976. The principle of 'Fair Use' was established as law by Section 107 of The Copyright Act of 1976. 'Fair Use' legally eliminates the need to obtain permission or pay royalties for the use of previously copyrighted materials if the purposes of display include 'criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research.' Section 107 establishes four criteria for determining whether the use of a work in any particular case qualifies as a 'fair use'. A work used does not necessarily have to satisfy all four criteria to qualify as an instance of 'fair use'. Rather, 'fair use' is determined by the overall extent to which the cited work does or does not substantially satisfy the criteria in their totality. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use,' you must obtain permission from the copyright owner. For more information go to: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml>

THIS DOCUMENT MAY CONTAIN COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL. COPYING AND DISSEMINATION IS PROHIBITED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNERS.

Source: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml>

[Return to Top](#)